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Portraying Mental Illnesses

Just a quick little disclaimer that a lot of these chapters were written in 2017 and 2018, and don't reflect my current opinions. I've left them up as there's still some good points there, but just keep in mind a lot of the aggressive, "you can't do this, it's the worst, and it makes you a terrible writer" points are not a good representation of who I am as a person and what I believe about writing. The revised chapters are much more constructive and accurate to my current beliefs .

This isn't just a problem in Warriors fics, it's everywhere! However, I've seen far too many of fics with these issues floating around.

When writing seriously, it's important that you write things correctly. Like, if you're writing a character with a broken leg, you're not going to have it heal in a week. That's not right at all! So why does it happen with mental illnesses?

It's all too easy to Google "How long does it take for a cat's broken leg to heal?" The information is right there! However, with mental illnesses, it's harder. Whilst there are tons of helpful sites, the majority talk about symptoms. You never quite know how someone is feeling. The main issue is, people are uneducated.

If you're going to write, do your research. It's not hard. I know it's exciting, and you just want to write, but the more research and effort you put into it, the better it'll be. So if you intend on writing about a mental illness, research, research, research. Read a ton of different sites. Ask people you find online wit the mental illness, more often than not, they'll be happy to help. There are Tumblr accounts dedicated to this,
@/script-shrink being a great one.

There is a controversial tip for writers, which is hard to sum up into one sentence. It's basically is "not writing from the point of view of something, like having an anxiety disorder, being a Native American or being gay, if you aren't." It's not as straightforward as that, though. Of course you can have side characters who are these

things. But if it's the main character, no. Why? Because no matter how much research, you still don't know what it feels like. I somewhat agree with this, but somewhat don't.

One common misconception is portraying depression as "being full of pain and wanting to die."
I haven't had clinical depression, but I was diagnosed with depressive tendencies, which could have developed into clinical depression. So, I know what I know because of what I've heard and researched about depression.

It's less "Why is my life so painfulll" and more lethargy.
It's less "I'm so saaaaad" and more "I can't seem to experience any positive feelings anymore. This can be anywhere between negative thoughts to complete numbness"

People who are depressed aren't always suicidal. People who are suicidal aren't necessarily depressed, though the majority are.

Do your research, kids. Depression is a mental illness that greatly affects a person's life. From what I have heard of it, clinical depression makes even the smallest tasks seem impossible. You cannot force yourself to do simple things. It's a lack of self esteem, and feeling guilty, and worthless, and like you have no purpose.

It's not emo bangs and crying because your life is so painful.

The next problem is anxiety.
We don't blush cutely and stammer. We don't hide behind our hair.

I've been diagnosed with general anxiety and social anxiety, and I can tell you, it's nothing like it's portrayed. We're jumpy, excessively worrying about things we know are irrational but **we just can't stop,** we find socialisation hard, and we're really just an anxious mess.

These are the main issues, because according to the Warriors fandom, no one could ever suffer from any other disorder/mental illness, oh no.

Well, in conclusion, y'all need to get your shit together and research

your ass off. And any romanticisation? Just no.

Grammar and Spelling

I swear to god.

I have seen so many fics with shitty spelling and grammar.

If English is not your first language, it is completely understandable.

Anyone can make typos, that's completely understandable. I do it all the time.

There are many rules with english grammar. I'm not even going to try and pretend that I know them all. I know the basic grammar, (as do most english speakers) and I consider that enough.

The problem is when people who can use grammar, and can spell properly, don't do it. It makes even the best fanfiction terrible.

It can affect your writing in different ways, depending in your style. The one which bothers me the most is when people have the whole "protagonist is narrating" style, similar to the writing style of Percy Jackson/Rick Riordan novels. The style itself is fine, but when combined with terrible grammar... it's terrible.

My friend has this style, but she is terrible with grammar. It pains me to read what she writes. (But I've said nothing because I'm too nice)

An example of this with and without grammar, you can really see how grammar and correct spelling influenced your writing.

"'Hello young kits. Whats that you want to hear my story? Okay let's start at the beginning One day my mother and father decided to not that farr! My story starts when I was an apprentice. Well I was a really good fighter and hunter i was better than the others."

"Hello, young kits. What's that? You want to hear my story? Okay, let's start at the beginning. One day, my mother and father decided to... Not that far! My story starts when I was an apprentice. Well, I

was a really good fighter; I was better than the others."

Can you see the difference? Despite the fact that the writing itself was terrible, the grammar and spelling greatly improved it.

But it's not only english spelling/grammar. In the world of warriors, specific words are capitalized, and others are not.

Take "Clan" for example. "Clan" is always capitalized. Always.

ThunderClan. ShadowClan. RiverClan. WindClan. SkyClan. StarClan. Both parts of the word are capitalized.

Names gets on my nerves the most. It is not "FireStar." It is not "IceCloud." It is "Firestar," and "Icecloud." Only the prefix is capitalized, never the suffix. I can guarantee that if you use this in a fanfiction I will not read it. I cannot force myself to read it. I absolutely hate this.

Another is the use of a full stop (period, for you Americans) at th end of dialogue. I'm guilty of this, so many of us are guilty of this.
"Bramblefoot, that's a terrible idea." Amberclaw mumbled
No, no! That's incorrect. Unless action follows the dialogue, use a comma instead.
"Bramblefoot, that's a terrible idea." Ambertail flicked her ear.
However, if the action occurs in the middle of the dialogue, that's when a comma is used.
"Bramblefoot," Ambertail flicked her ear "that's a terrible idea."

What is common spelling mistakes used in Warriors fanfictions?

Prologue. Most stories have them, including my own. But it is not "prologe." It is not "prouloge." It is "prologue."

And rogue. This is my biggest issue. "Rouge" is red in French. "Rogue" is the proper spelling. Learn it.

Representation of Lgbt+

Let's talk about the representation of Lgbt+ in Warriors fanfiction.

Or more accurately, the lack of it.

There seem to be a very small number of fics with lgbt+ characters in them. I haven't found a single nonbinary character!

I don't have as much time to read as I would like, so I haven't read that many fanfictions. So there may very well be a few nonbinary characters out there, I just haven't come across them yet.

So why is representation such an important thing? The chances are, if you're a minority, then you already understand this. (However that isn't always the case!)
Representation normalizes things. This is very prominent with poc, because pretty much everyone portrayed in books, movies,etc, are white. Children and teenagers (and adults) who are PoC do not feel accepted or a valued member of society. However, when more PoC characters are written about, or seen on tv, many begin to recognise their worth.

As far as lgbt+ goes, many children do not understand why they are different, because a lot of them haven't heard much about it. However, having more representation in the media would really help teach them that being lgbt+ is okay, and it is real.

But again, that isn't Warriors. If you have a Wattpad, then you most likely have access to other forms of social media. So you've most likely heard about Lgbt+ already. So why is it important now?

Because it's hard for lgbt+ people to read fanfiction after fanfiction, whilst being reminded constantly that they are not accepted to the point where it is normal. This includes transgender people and non binary people, as these people are part of the lgbt+ community.
Or simply because, I don't know, just a wild idea here, but it would be nice to just have some recognition?

"It's unnatural in cats!" I have done my research and come up with a lot of contradictory information. Male cats do appear to mate with other males, although it's a dominance thing. However, on an official list of homosexuality found in animals, cats were on the list.

So whatever the answer is, it doesn't matter. These aren't normal cats. There's a magical thing called personification/ anthropomorphism.

"But it's not in the actual series!"
It's called fanfiction for a reason. Also, different Erin's have confirmed different things. Correct me if I'm wrong, but didn't Kate confirm Tallstar was homosexual? (And that he and Jake had feelings for each other)
And Vicki confirmed RavenBarley.

"But what about kits?!"
Not all mates want to have kits. Not all mates *have* to have kits. If two mates with the same genitals want to have kits, then they could have another cat mate with one of the couple. Either way, someone ends up pregnant and giving birth, and them the couple would be the kits parents. It's pretty simple. One word: trans.

But if you are going to have lgbt+ characters, don't do the gay stereotype. Please don't. I only know of one gay guy who fits the gay stereotype.

Just a few things that would be nice to see
1.) Genderqueer cats
2.) A lgbt+ cat falling for a straight cat
3.) Aro/Ace representation. Not everything needs a romance, and some asexuals will still have kits, it would be only for the sake of procreation, and the fact that they wanted a kit. Not for the sexual stuff.
3.) A bisexual she-cat becoming mates with another she-cat. It seems that all of them end up with males, and while there is nothing wrong with someone who is bisexual/biromantic falling for someone who isn't the same gender, it would be nice to see some bisexual she-cats become mates with another she-cat. **Once again, update from future me: this entire point is wrong, ignore it.**
4.) A cat who is bisexual, but the two genders that they are

attracted to are not male and female. Whilst that is common, bisexual/biromantic actually means being attracted to two genders, romantically or sexually (or both!)

Talk to people who are the gender/sexuality you're going to write about, or just research it. Don't add to the misconceptions.

Unrealistic Names

Disclaimer: This chapter has been getting a lot of attention lately and I want to remind anyone reading of what I said in the beginning - this is an old book, most of it written in 2017/2018, and a lot of the opinions shared and general tone in the earlier chapters are outdated. There are updated versions of some of them, including this one. These days I don't even read fanfiction, let alone care what people name their ocs :)

Someone slit my throat and fling me into a volcano.

Have people who write with names like "Dragonblood" and "Angelwing" even read Warriors? Do they understand it at all?

Naming is a very important part of Clan culture. Using names of things that cats wouldn't know is completely disregarding that.

There are two types of naming for Warriors, traditional and non traditional. **Edit: they're fanmade.**
I would suggest you do your research on the different types of naming.

Cats are generally named after plants, animals, the weather... Just nature in general, things that feral cats would know about.

The names generally represent the character in two ways.

First is the prefix. In non traditional naming, it can be anything. In traditional naming, the cat is named after their appearance. Never their eyes, as kits don't open their eyes till three weeks after birth, and are all born with blue eyes anyway.

For example, a ginger tabby could be called 'Foxkit' because they are ginger, and the coloring of a fox is similar. They might be called 'Peachkit' because of similar coloring.

Suffixes are more personal. The cat now has a well developed personality, and they are named after this, or a cwrtain skill that

they are known for. Foxpaw might have an excellent sense of smell, and be skilled in the area of tracking. Because if this, they could be called 'Foxnose'.
Pearkit could've grown up to be known for his energy and how hard he works, thus earning him the name 'Pearbee'.

Non traditional suffixes follow the same rules as traditional suffixes.

Now you can see why cats are named what they are, and how important it is to clan culture. After all, a name is something that is earned, it is a symbol of their place in the social hierarchy; a symbol of their status. Kits aim to be an apprentice, to be presented with the title 'paw.' Apprentices aim to be warriors, (or medicine cats) and receive their full name.

Cats do not know what angels are. Nor dragons. And they generally won't know about gemstones! (Although there may be a few exceptions, but I doubt it.)

A few example of unrealistic names that I have seen are
1.) Dragonstar
2.) Glitchstar
3.) Watercup
4.) Gemheart
5.) Crystalfire
6.) Sapphirelight
7.) Stuffedtoysky
8.) Winterclaw
9.) Autumnleaf
10.) Icecreampaw

Cats don't know what a cup is. They don't know about gems, sapphires, or crystals. They don't know what a stuffed toy is. They don't know what glitched are, or winter, or autumn (or any other season in it's human name) and the definitely don't know what ice-cream is!

Warrior names are meant to be beautiful, and have meaning. Names like Appledusk. Names like Deerleap, Ottersplash, and Crowfrost.

Not names like Pegasuswing and Summerfeather.

Most people, when they're younger, go through this phase. I once had two oc's, Honeyhope and Skyangel, which I didn't even create, I just found them on the internet and claimed them my own. God, I was a disgusting child. If you have any characters or oc's with names like these, change them!

These names are disgusting and disrespect warrior culture. They are annoying and they really grind my gears! It's not cool to be edgy with your 'Lostsoul' or your 'Darkmind'

So stop. Educate yourself on Warrior naming. Change your unrealistic names.

Writing Canon Characters

This is an issue that is pretty complicated.

You know when you read a fanfiction about a canon character, and the writer has their personality wrong? When the character does and says things that they wouldn't do? Frustrating, right?

Yes. But it's harder than that.

Everyone has a different view of a character's personality. For example, I see Hollyleaf as a hypocritical, obsessive murderer who got off the hook. However others see her as brave and loyal.
I wrote this sometime last year, and I can say, my opinion has definitely changed. I don't view Hollyleaf as a hero. I don't particularly like her, but I view her instead as a morally grey character who had a LOT of potential. Specifically antihero potential. This is a good place to state that it's important to analyze characters and form an opinion based on actual thought, rather than just following the "cool" opinion. This can be difficult in a fandom where one opinion is seen as a correct opinion, which is very toxic. Of course, some people do it just for fun and don't want to analyze. That's okay too, but IG you're going to be serious, I recommend understanding more about a character. Learn their motives, their mistakes, and their good deeds. Try to develop them more than the Hunter's did, because their characterization is severely lacking. You are still able to hate a character while understanding them.
(Update added 27.11.17 - 4.46 am. Time to sleep, I'd say.)

How is there such a difference?

Interpretation is difficult. And personalities are no different. So is there really a correct way to write them?

Yes. There is.

Most characters can be narrowed down. To their traits, to how they would think, how they would say. They need to be properly analyzed.

For example, say you were writing about Yellowfang. Cinderpaw/pelt would most likely make an appearance. It doesn't matter if you dislike Cinderpelt, she would never snap at someone without a reason to. She would never knock over a kit, for example.

Say you were writing about Scourge. Scourge isn't some tragic victim who can be tamed by a she-cat. No matter his past, it doesn't excuse his actions, Scourge is a relentless murderer, he doesn't care about other cats. Scourge is possibly incapable, or simply doesn't care, of showing love to another cat. And even if he did, this she-cat wouldn't miraculously change him into some precious, loving little angel.

Or what about a Firestar fic. It doesn't matter if you hate Sandstorm, she wouldn't just yell and Firestar and constantly be offended and angry. She does seem to be offended easily, but know she has mellowed out.

As you can see, reading a fix with character's that act completely uncharacteristically is so aggravating.

So, If you are writing about canon characters, try and portray them they way they were in the books. You can't please everyone, but if you do write wrong, then people will not read your stories.

Really, whenever I read a fanfiction with a canon character acting like they usually wouldn't, it makes me want to pull my hair out.

Analyze your characters. Write them right.

Unrealistic Clans

Now this is a kind of matter that isn't just black and white, though they rarely are. This specific issue really depends on how it's written.

What is an unrealistic Clan?

Well, I see it as two types. Let's start with the first one.

These are the obviously unrealistic Clans. You don't usually see that much of these ones, which can be perceived as good, or bad. These clans are the ones where, for example, the Clan lives inside a volcano, and drinks lava and eats rocks. Or a Clan that live underwater, for example.

Obviously, this is completely unrealistic. So, what about it is good, and what is bad?

It really works with personal preference. Some like it, others don't. I personally don't mind these types of unrealistic Clans, or even like it to an extent. For me, It really matters how far you go, and what really goes on.

A Clan living in a volcano, drinking lava and eating rocks. For me, this is too far. Perhaps if they lived *beside* the volcano, and ate whatever prey they could find around there, and drank water, would be more acceptable. After all, it's still somewhat unrealistic. How could cat's bodies withstand the heat? This is where you add in the explanation.

Now, these cats could've been genetically mutated. It could be an alternate universe, where these cats can handle immense heat.

With unrealistic Clans, this is what really makes an unrealistic Clan okay. The explanation. In fact, this is important with all Clans! The explanation, as I call it, is how the Clan came together, how they have certain abilities and strengths. For example, SkyClan cats had

a special ability of high leaps and jumps. This is because strong muscles in their hind legs were bred into their genes. RiverClan can and enjoy swimming because that is the belief they were raised on, and sleek fur that sheds water was bred into their genetics.

So, back to the underwater Clan. This, for unknown reasons, is rather appealing to me. In fact, I would love to write about one! But an explanation is needed! (Okay, but I'm getting sudden inspiration, I might actually write about this!) A plausible explanation for this is that twolegs captured a large group of cats and began experimenting on them. There was an explosion in the laboratory, and the cats escaped. However, what had been done to them was irreparable, and they soon grew gills. As a consequence, they could no longer breathe oxygen, and were forced to flee underwater. Over time, they evolved to become the clan they are today. Or, a more spiritual explanation could be that they were given the gift, or curse, of being able to breathe underwater by their Warrior Ancestors.

What is the second type of unrealistic Clan. This is just my theory, and is controversial. This type is simply a Clan without any sort of explanation.

Every Clan has a backstory, a history of how they came to be. If your Clan doesn't have that, then how realistic are they?

That is my view on the unrealistic Clans. Sometimes they work, but other times they don't. I find myself growing increasingly frustrated with the second type. For me, personally, I feel as if unrealistic Clans have the potential to work.

(On a completely unrelated note, has anyone listened to Colours Stripped by Halsey? I love it)

The Portrayal Of Villains

{Trigger Warning: Mention of rape/rapists}

This is one of my biggest problems in Warriors. The villains are pathetic.
This happens in fanfictions, and in the Warriors series itself.

The villains are all murderers who don't feel remorse, nor have any reason whatsoever for what they do, other than ambition.

NoPe.

This is pathetic and annoying. Everyone has a reason for what they do, because here's the deal. People, even if they are doing the wrong thing, believe that they are right. This lessens their actions in no way, however.

When was the last time you did something terrible? What were you feeling at the time?

I've done shitty things. We've all done shitty things. An example of this was the time where I manipulated a friend. I am not proud of this. I am horrified at the way that I didn't even think, that I didn't even recognize that I did something wrong.

Let's use an example of this. I had a group of four friends, including myself at the start of the year. We are all still friends now, but no longer a group.

One of our friends is incredibly smart, and is honestly good at everything. I mean it.

This friend would constantly put down, and make rude comments about me, and my other two friends. It was a toxic friendship.

The smart thing to do would've been to talk to her. Did we? Nope. Instead we talked about her behind her back, and ended up excluding her from a sleepover. In the end, shit went down,

everything's okay now.

Did we do the right thing? Definitely not. Did we know that at the time? No. We were trying to distance ourselves from a toxic friendship, and went about it the wrong way. Did the fact that we had a reason excuse us? No. We still hurt her, no matter what we thought we were doing. But were we really the villains?

The point behind that story was to show you that things aren't as simple as black and white, good and evil. We all wronged, despite thinking we were right. The same goes in Warriors.

Take this, for example.

Smokefur is dying. His mate, Poppytail wishes there was something she could do, but her clan doesn't have the catmint. So she steals from another Clan, ThistleClan.

Despite the fact that she was stealing from her mate, she still stole from another Clan. Could she be counted as a villain?

What defines a villain? It depends on how you perceive it. My view on it? True evil are those who rape, then those who kill. However, I'm not entirely sure what I believe.

In Warriors, any cat who breaks the code can be referred to as a villain. Perhaps not evil. Refer to the real world, not all criminals are murders. There are rapists (Though this is rather controversial so I'd recommend not doing it, put trigger warnings at the start of your chapter. This can be very triggering for rape victims. Also, If you think trigger jokes are funny, go away now.) People who steal, even vandalism! There are many criminal offenses, these can all be considered villainous crimes.

The villains are all the same. Usually some dark-furred tom fueled by ambition, kills remorselessly.

Not every villain is Tigerstar. I mean, think about it, he was very similar to Brokenstar. Both ended up as leaders, both villains, both dark tabbies, both ambitious cats who kill to get what they want.

And don't get me started on Hawkfrost. He was nothing but a

pathetic copy of Tigerstar.

This is why Mapleshade was so loved. Because she was different, and actually had a story.

Another problem is when people excuse villains because of tragic pasts. No, no, nopiTy nope. There is a reason behind their actions, but not an excuse.

So, in conclusion, my problems with villains are:
1.) That they never have a reason for their actions other than ambition.
2.) They're all murderers. (Then again, my villain's in my fic "The Hunted" are murderers lmao)
3.) They are all generic copies of Tigerstar.
4.) They have no depth whatsoever
5.) TraGic BacKstOries.

Main Character Always Becomes Leader

Can you hear that? That's the sound of me screaming in annoyance.

It seems that so many fics main character becomes leader. It's so fucking common.

The second that the main character becomes deputy, I know what will happen. It's just so obvious and overused!

People do this because they want their character to be all powerful. I mean, really? It happened in the first arc, so now everyone has to do it.

This frustrates many readers, because it's so overused. I can guarantee that we've all read at least two of these books! It's also so damn predictable. We don't want to know exactly what's going to happen. We want to have plot twists and surprises that will really get us into the story.

What happens when you want your cat to be leader? Perhaps start off with your cat as deputy, so we don't have to go through the whole
"Wow! My leader chose me as deputy!! I never saw it coming, imagine being actually leader!!1!" Seriously kids. If you really want to have your cat as a leader, make it different from the common story.

Leaders aren't always the best thing to go to, if you want your cat to have a position of power. A medicine cat has the arguably the most power. A deputy who doesn't become leader makes a nice change, still with power. Even a well respected warrior has power, even if it isn't as defined. Think about how everyone respected Whitestorm, and the way they valued his opinion, and regarded him almost as highly as Bluestar.

Or, even better, your cat could just be an average warrior. Everyone has some sort of power. Over yourself. And you also have some sort of power "over" your friends - they should care about you and your opinion enough to regard it highly.

Or, one thing you could do, is have your cat already leader.

This is pretty short, because it's fairly straightforward. The idea is overused and boring, try stay away from it. Please and thank you.

Rogues and... what??

This has been on my mind for a while.

In almost every fanfic, whenever a character encounters a cat of non-clan descent, they are a rogue. And of course, they're fierce and vicious, because rogues can't be anything else.

What happened to loners?
Kittypets?
Or even cats of other groups, non-Clan and non-tribe?

Apparently, they don't exist.

Of course rogues are fun to add in. They always stir up trouble.

But are they always aggressive?

According to the Warriors Wiki, the definition of a rogue is controversial, and has been defined in many different ways.

The Prophecies Begin, and Secrets of the Clans, refer to rogues specifically as being cats exiled from a Clan.Most other books imply that rogues are cats who have chosen to live by themselves without other cats or Twolegs and scorn the Clan cats for their beliefs.

Some books, such as Firestar's Quest, call every cat living on their own a "rogue," even if they are not hostile, and act more like loners.

So what really is it? Are the people who write only about rogues right? Or are rogues cats who are cats exiles from their Clan?

This is what Warriors Wiki had to say next.

In the Clans' point of view, rogues are usually depicted and thought of as being selfish and aggressive. They do not respect the warrior code or the cats who follow it, unlike loners. Cats who are banished from their Clan usually live as rogues. They occasionally trespass on Clan territory to steal prey but if a patrol finds them, they will

chase him or her back over the border . Even when they live in a band, they aren't afraid to turn on each other. They are very violent and are known to not have any qualms about attacking elderly and very young cats.

They sometimes kill without having a good reason. Rogues have also abandoned their kits in the past.

Note: This says "In the Clan's point of view." So, rogues aren't really like this.

So know we know what rogues are. And here's my problem.

There's ! never ! loners ! or ! kittypets ! only ! rogues !

In fanfictions, I barely get any mention of a loner. It's infuriating. Just because they don't cause trouble, doesn't mean that they're not important. They could play a major part in your plot. Rogues are overused, loners are underused. Let's get some loner recognition!

What about kittypets? Well, it's understandable that they don't usually show up. After all, not all territories would be close to a Twolegplace, and the Clan's are taught to scorn kittypets. (Clearly seen in Sandpaw's prejudice against Firepaw) They aren't usually going to willingly interact with a kittypet. And kittypets are scared of Clan cats. I mean, they're wild! They eat bones and fight each other! The kittypets hear rumors and believe them. So kittypet and Clan cat interaction is more uncommon.

Here's an idea. You have your Tribe, your Clan... surely there would be other types of groups of cats? I mean, you could create your own type of group, and they could interact with your Clan. How would that go down? There are many possibilities with this one, it's something that I'd like to see more often.

Love Triangles +

Oh for fuck's sake.
Why is this still a thing?

I have to admit, the Warriors fanfiction writers are pretty good with this; they usually don't do this.

But when they do, it makes me want to kill them with a pitchfork.

It's ridiculously overused.

"Oh no! I'm a beautiful silver tabby she-cat, and I'm in love with two toms! I love the friendly, loving tom in my Clan, but I love that handsome, dark tom from another Clan! Oh whatever shall I do?"

This is aLWAYS what it's like, and I can't even read that shit.

Honestly, the feelings our lovely silver tabby has for her "handsome, dark" tom is lust. Not love.

These are just so... Boring. There's no need whatsoever to include some boring ass love triangle that won't impact the general plot.

Here's looking at you, Dovewing.

If you want to include some love dramas, consider having a failed relationship.

Can you hear the sounds of those writers who never let anything bad happen to their character's crying?

Seriously, kids, your story doesn't have to end in love.

Okay but seriously. How unrealistic are love triangles anyway? If you can't choose one, then you don't love them enough anyway.

Next subject. The wonderful subject of romance.

It seems most fics include love, and there's nothing wrong with that! But your story doesn't have to end with romance.

Whilst shipping your characters is great fun, you don't need to have romance all the time. You can always have minor ships, but your main character doesn't have to be in a relationship to be valid.

In fact, let's talk about the magic of platonic relationships.

If you don't know what this means, it's a friendship.

This is so undervalued and has very little recognition. Platonic relationships are incredibly important, and are in no way less than a romantic one.

Now, I've never had a romantic relationship with anyone, so I can't speak from experience. But trust me on the fact that I would be lost without some certain platonic relationships.

My best friend is a guy. And no, people who can't accept that a guy and a girl can be just friends, we have never had any romantic feelings towards the other. (It does help that he's gay)

He is the opposite of me, and I can't really sum it up in words, but I honestly couldn't live without that guy.

That's just one example, but if you haven't been able to see, platonic relationships are **is important.**

Think about Firestar and Graystripe. Do you really think that Firestar would've been able to cope without Graystripe when he first joined the Clan? Their relationship was more important than people realize.

So put more effort in your platonic relationships than your romantic ones, and don't ever feel pressured to include romance.

Now, let's move onto the actual romance.

There is a lot of fics where it just happens. No development whatsoever. This is annoying as fuck. No relationship is ever love at first sight. Well that's my view on it. Sure, you might find someone

attractive, but it sure as hell isn't love.

But one thing I find annoying is everyone's solution - friends before lovers. This is great, don't get me wrong, but it isn't the only thing you can do.

Enemies then lovers. Another somewhat cliché one.
Neutral acquaintances before lovers - Rarely seen. I'd love to see more.
Attraction- lovers. I'd like to see some relationships where someone is attracted to someone, and they become closer as they become friends.

Those are some things that I'd like to see.

Also, a wild idea, have your character already have a mate. What a strange concept!

I Hate You, I Love You..

There's always those characters.
Two different extremes of the spectrum.
Both equally as painful to read about.

There's always that person who has all their characters love their main character. Always.

And there's always that person who has all their characters hate their main character.

These are both really annoying and they piss me off so much.

Let's be real. There's always going to be someone who hates you. You're never going to be loved by everyone. It's the same with your characters.

I hate people who do this. I don't like to throw the term 'Mary Sue' around, but if your character is loved by everyone.. It's a good sign that said character is a Mary Sue.

It's pathetic, it's annoying, it's useless. Everyone wants their main character to be likable. Otherwise people wouldn't read it! But having everyone else love your character, isn't going to make your readers like them.

Of course they can be popular and be loved by many. Of course they can be one of those people who are difficult to hate. But don't ever make them loved by everyone. No one, I repeat, no one, likes that. At all.

There are people who are widely liked. But it isn't because they're "perfect." There are always valid reasons.

For example:

I love my brother because he's funny, I've grown up with him and he's loving and kind. (He's my twin, he has autism, a speech

disorder, and a few learning disabilities.)

I love my friend because she genuinely fucking cares about everyone.

I love this guy I know because he's looks out for everyone, and he's really creative.

I love this girl I know because she's everything I aspire to be. She's kind, funny, clever, you should follow her, she's Oaapha...

What about in a Warriors setting? (Non-canon characters)

Fawnheart loves Echoeyes because she's accepting and free-spirited.

Ducktail loves Acornclaw because he's so bright and fun to be around.

Nightstar loves Velvetfur because she's deep and empathetic. (A reference to my fanfic? Of course.)

Sparrowwing loves Jaythroat because he's fair-minded and witty.

See? All reasons, not just "Everyone loves Silverangel because she's pretty and perfect!! 1!"

So, what about the tragic 'Everyone hates me and I'm bullied for both reason waaaaaah' characters? Also revolting. They make me want to vomit out my intestines and strangle the writer with them. (V i o l e n c e)

No one is ever hated by everyone. Literally. Some people are hated by almost everyone, but never everyone.

No one is ever hated without a reason. Some examples?
I hate this guy in my class because he makes racist and transphobic 'jokes' (He's just an asshole, in general)

I get really fucking pissed at one of my friends, because she acts superior to my other friends and I, and can be vEry closed-minded, and doesn't consider other's opinions.

I hate this girl in my art class at school because she's a bully and a bitch.

I hate this group of immature boys in my art class after school. Because they're immature and annoying.

See? Make a list of some people you hate and why. There's always a reason. (Although that reason may end up blurred and you just hate everything that they do.)

Some Warriors examples?
(Non-canon characters)

Blackspots hates Skyflight because she's really shallow.

Voleheart hates Iceeyes because he was her partner in a battle and ran away, leaving her to fight alone.

Flamefur hates Brightspring because she is an insensitive asshole.

Pumpkinpelt hates Rabbitbite because he was once a bully.

See? There are some reasons that are all valid!

If you are going to create a character who is widely hated, then that's fine! We can all think of a person who is hated by almost everyone, right? Just remember, if you're going to do this, have a fucking reason.

The best thing you can do is have a balance. Have a character who is disliked by some, liked by others. Hated by some and loved by others. It is realistic, which helps people connect better with your character.

Just have a normal cat, not some "I'm so special, there'll be a prophecy about me!!" cat. No one likes those.
No one.

Forbidden Relationships

No.

No no no no no.

Way too overused.

Look at the actual series. Let's list a few forbidden relationships, shall we?
CrowLeaf
SilverGray
BlueOak
RaggedYellow
LionHeather
DoveTiger
ReedFallow
FeatherCrow (Pedophilia)
MapleApple
TigerSasha
FeatherHal
MinnowMouse
And more!

Now, I understand it. Not everyone's going to find love in their Clan. I mean, if soulmates exist, it's likely cats will love cats who aren't in the same Clan.

But many do! And there's the big thing:
Most warriors would choose loyalty to their Clan over love.

You see, these cats have been taught, all their lives, that loyalty to their Clan is the most important thing. That following the Warrior Code is very important.

In the later arcs, this is all forgotten and disregarded, and this really infuriates me.

Notice how in the first arc, the Warrior Code was followed and regarded highly?

Yeah. That's what Clan life should be like.

Now, I'm not saying we should all be obsessive assholes like Hollyleaf. But we should care.

Forbidden relationships are so fucking overused. Congratulations, you have a medicine cat. Your medicine at does not need to fall in love. At all. Crushes? Fine. Absolutely normal. Feelings reciprocated? Absolutely fine, unless they're acted upon. No romantic feelings? Absolutely fine, normal, and valid.

If you're so desperate to have a forbidden relationship, perhaps have your protagonist have previously been in one, but the two broke up. Now, the protagonist would have to deal with daily life, and whenever they see each other.

Or,the protagonist could fall in love, but plot twist, puts their loyalty first.

There's not really much to say on this subject, so sorry for the short chapter. I think most people understand the main reasoning why the forbidden relationships shouldn't be used, the fact that it's boring, and so overused. We already know what's going to happen!

Protagonist falls in love with a cat from another Clan - usually either a "dark, handsome tabby tom" or a "beautiful silver tabby"

Heterosexual of course.

Protagonist hides it from everyone, perhaps their friend finds out?

Possibly a love triangle happens, this is usually noted with female protagonists.

Oh no, the she-cat becomes pregnant! What a big shock! It's not like she would've been able to tell that she was going to have kits. I mean, seriously, they mated, how could pregnancy every have happened?

Seriously, why are she-cats always so surprised when they find out that they're pregnant? This goes for toms too.

She-cat has kits.

And it goes on.

Yep. It's fairly predictable, because it's happened so many times before!

I'd recommend not including a forbidden relationship, and if you do, don't go with the clichés. In fact, it doesn't have to have your protagonist at all! I'd stay away from a friend in one, and maybe even siblings, because it has been done before. Hey, the forbidden relationship could be between background characters, though it is somehow brought to light, or even a parent!

Oh, and as for medicine cats? Don't even go there. Can we have one loyal medicine cat? P l e a s e?

Glorifying Powers

The last chapter on powers really sparked my interest in powers in Warrior Cat fanfiction.

One thing that I've noticed, something that really annoys me, is how everyone glorifies powers. I mean,they're superpowers! Of you have them, you're so lucky, and special.... Right?

Special? Maybe. But lucky? How about no.

Think about it. Really think about it. Would powers really be a good thing?

Mind reading - you get to learn so much about people and also learn what they think of you!

Invincibility - uh... You can't get hurt. Or defeated. What's not to like?

Water manipulation - You can control water, and bend it to your ways. Very useful, and you'd feel amazingly powerful!

Well that's all fun and games, but let's get closer.

Let's focus on Jayfeather's power, the ability to read emotions and walk in dreams.

Hell yeah, it's be pretty great. I mean, you get to understand what people are feeling! Who wouldn't want that? And walking in dreams?

Jayfeather's powers are very orientated on other people (cats) What would realistically happen if you had that power?

Well, you would likely get very caught up in others. You would try and help them, comfort them, and eventually get so caught up in other's lives that you stop caring about your own.

You could potentially die because of this, if you got so focused in everyone around you that you forgot to eat/drink, etc.

Or, you get the opposite, you might hate the power, and not want to hear others emotions, you just want to live your life! You may end up committing suicide just to be free of it.
(Insert Halsey: "Sick of all this noise..")

Or you get the whole "I'm so overwhelmed, all these thoughts give me headaches!" And then poor, dear protagonist gets taught how to block out the noise. Try to stay away from this one, it's fairly common.

Let's talk the power of flight. I've seen this in a few fanfictions, and the ones I've seen, the cat is loved for their power. How about no.

Cats would hate it! Dear protagonist would be bullied, extremely. In fact, they'd probably be exiled because their power is quite unnatural. I mean, they all are, but this is crossing the line, in my opinion.

Have you ever thought about said protagonist being terrified of heights? When I was younger, people would always ask, "What superpower would you have if you could ever have one?" And I'd follow the crowd and say flight. Now, I say mind-reading for reasons I've already stated. I would never want the power of flight. I am deathly scared of heights, it may even be a phobia. (Because you know, most people actually don't have phobias, just major fears. I phobia can send you into an anxiety attack, you can start crying and even feel panicky at simply seeing a picture of the thing you have a phobia of. My friend has a phobia, he can't look at pictures of snakes. One time one came up on his explore feed and he flung his phone and cried. That's a phobia. My dear of heights is border lining on a phobia, I tend to feel slightly panicky at pictures/ videos of heights, and I have been known to cry pretty badly at things like high ropes. But I'm not too bad, I have jumped off something that's 3.5 metres before.)

What about the drawbacks of invincibility?

You'd most likely be a cocky, arrogant bastard. Also you wouldn't

really have a sense of fear. You'd partake in reckless, dangerous behaviour, probably forgetting about the safety of the people around you. You also would not grow as a person, from failure. No matter how horrible and scary failure is, it is an important growth step. (I'm so hypercritical, I have a hUge fear of failure. And I'm failing maths hahahakillmehaha)

Dovewing's hearing power? Overwhelming, like the typical mind-reading story. Not to mention you wouldn't feel much of your own person. It's very similar to mind-reading/emotion reading.

Every power has a drawback. A positive side, and a negative side. I'd love to read a fanfic that focuses more on the negative side of things.

(I'm sorry if there are bad typos, I'm writing this with my glasses off, in the shower. [Water resistant phone, y'all] And I'm too lazy to edit.)

Pedophilia

This is the most vile, putrid thing. It's literally abuse. And guess what? It's found in Warriors.

What is pedophilia? Well, it's the act of being sexually attracted to a child or teenager (someone younger than eighteen.)

The common misconception is having a huge age gap between lovers (Take LeopardPine for example. A significantly large age gap,but not pedophilia.)

A good example? SpottedFire. I love pointing this out, because the butthurt shippers start screeching.

SpottedFire was pedophilia. Firepaw was barely more than a kit. If he were human, I'd say he'd be twelve. Now Spottedleaf was around two years old, I'd say that equals around 26. Do you see the problem? It doesn't matter if he loves her back. (Just a kit-crush, if you ask me.) It's still pedophilia. It's wrong, It's disgusting. She's a fucking pedophile, he's a minor.

Now that y'all understand what it is, let's talk about why it's bad.

It's clearly just vile shit. Being sexually attracted to a child is just wrong. Pure wrongness. I can't even explain it, it repulses me.

Before y'all start whinging that they're just cats, and not humans, they're personified cats. They have a social structure, religion, they love each other, etc. I'm pretty sure Mousedapple has a rant about that.

This happens a lot in Warriors fics. It mainly happens because people don't recognize they're doing it. But it's still grossly wrong.

If you have in any of your fics, a warrior crushing on a kit or an apprentice, sTop now. Delete that shit. I don't care how much work it is, or how much it will impact the story, take that pedophilic

trash away. Far away. As in, fucking burn it.

I understand when people don't know and include it. But the problem lies when people are called out on this, and they don't change it. Pedophilia is literally abuse. You are promoting abuse, if you are aware that it's happening in your fic and not doing anything about it.

This may be simply Warriors fanfiction, but pedophilia is a real thing that occurs to people.

Let's think of the infamous Starkit's Prophecy. If I remember rightly, both Firestar, Graystripe, and Blackstar wanted to be Starpaw's mate.

This is pedophilia. She was an apprentice, a very young one at that, and they were Warriors.

Anything that involves a Warrior/Medicine Cat/Deputy/Leader/ Queen falling in love with a kit or an apprentice, is pedophilia. Any ship that you may have that includes a warrior and a kit/apprentice is pedophilia, and by shipping it, you are sending out a message that pedophilia is okay.

It is sick, it is wrong, I can't express my disgust in this properly.

Having an apprentice have a crush on a Warrior? Fine. Said warrior reciprocates the feelings? Nope! What about after the apprentice has become a warrior? That's fine. They'd both be of age then.

What about a kit having a crush on a warrior? I wouldn't recommend it. Warrior crushing on a kit? That's just sick. Fuck off.

Don't ever include pedophilia in your fanfics. It's horrific.

Gender Roles

Fuck everyone.

Warriors is a series about cats. Granted, they're personified cats, but let's abolish the gender roles, okay?

I am sick to death of it.

Why the fuck is every medicine cat female? Is it because males are incapable of being kind, caring, and sympathetic?

Because, you know, every medicine cat has those exact traits.

All the big, muscular, powerful, strong warriors are male, because god forbid a female have muscles! That's just ugly! Females can only be small, delicate and slender, that's attractive!

The bully or villain is usually a tom, because females just have to be desirable.

Females have "feminine" names such as flowers, or plants, something pretty sounding.

Males have "masculine" names such as wild animals, tough sounding names.

Because males have to be tough, and females delicate and gentle.

Only she-cats choose to take care of kits in the nursery instead of pursuing a warrior's life. Because males are supposed to be strong warriors, they can't be gentle and care for kits!

And friendship between a male and a female end in romance. Because males and females always fall in love, girls and guys can't be friends without wanting to fuck each other!

Gender roles are pathetic and need to be ended. Including them in warriors is stupid. Can we just destroy the gender roles?

This is short, but I'm FuRioUs, and if you have any more examples then please comment them, I'll add them and credit you. I'm also in science class :)

Smut

Why the flippity fuck is this a thing?

This is revolting.

Some people read/write/roleplay cat smut - cats mating - for fun. Why?? This is gross. They call it "lemons."

Why
The
Fuck?

Enjoying this shit is pretty close to zoophilia and really fucking disgusting.

First of all, they write it wrong.

Here's a little known fact for y'all: the tightness/looseness of a vagina has no relevance to how many people the vagina's owner has fucked.

Oh my! How shocking!

What is tightness/looseness then? Well, the muscles in the vagina are loose when the owner is relaxed. So if you're fucking a vagina that's tight, than the vagina owner's uncomfortable and tense. Your sex game's weAk.

So sorry all you smut-writers with your "big-dicked, handsome, sexy, amazing at mating toms"

And all the toms have big dicks. Sorry, but not all guys have big dicks, and size really doesn't matter. And cats probably have a dick size that doesn't vary. You know, because they're goddamn cats.

Cats tongues are barbed. So "licking a pussy" and "sucking a dick" would be painful. Not pleasurable. And considering the natural position of the tom's penis, it cannot be sucked as it is written.

Cats also have barbed penises. These cause pain for the female's vagina - so the entire sexual process is painful for the female. She doesn't "moan in pleasure." She would be howling in pain!

Cats do not mate for pleasure. Only humans and dolphins do. Cats mate to procreate.

Reading this shit is gross.
Writing this shit is gross.
Roleplaying this shit is gross.

From what i've heard, there are so many written in the style of rape. Why? This would be very triggering for someone who has experienced rape. Rape is in no way romantic. You should not enjoy reading about it. Rape is a subject that society needs to address more, and writing about it for enjoyment is horrific.

This is a short chapter but I have total disgust for this. You write smut? Fine. You write smut about cats mating? Get the hell away from me. That's just sick.

ShadowClan is evil!!!1!

Oh god.

It seems that in most fanfictions that involve the canon Clans, ShadowClan is depicted as evil. Why??

Some do this because that's what was done in the series, ShadowClan was known as evil. But times change. ShadowClan are no longer cruel. In fact, ShadowClan is a wreck.

Is it because of their name, ShadowClan?

Seriously, this really gets on my nerves. Why don't we have the oh-so-noble ThunderClan as evil for a change? Or WindClan? What about RiverClan?

ShadowClan deserve better representation, they're the Slytherins of the Warriors world. They are not evil - they have merely been given a bad reputation and shunted to the side.

ShadowClan deserve better than what they get! They're strong, really strong. They survived Brokenstar, Tigerstar, countless sicknesses, the great journey, The Dark Forest.. They didn't have any mysterious prophecy cats to save them.

Give them some credit! They've had a worse time recently than the other Clans, and look at what happened in Thunder and Shadows. Did they deserve that? No.

ShadowClan are awesome and everyone who says otherwise can suck my ass. (Nah, it's perfectly fine to have your own opinions.) Let's destroy the misconception/stereotype that ShadowClan are evil. It's time we all opened our eyes and realise that the series has changed drastically since The Prophecies Begin, and that ShadowClan should no longer be viewed as evil - because they've changed. Right now, they're a broken Clan in need of help, if they can even be considered a Clan anymore.

Let's make our fanfictions original, and stop giving ShadowClan a tough time.

Villains With Bad Pasts

These are honestly the worst things ever.

I take that back, pro anorexia blogs are. But anyway, let's get back to the topic.

Villains with bad pasts are okay, until they're used all the time. And, they usually are written like this in fanfics.

I really don't see the necessity of this? How does it make your villains any better? Some people seem to think that it makes their villains deeper as a character. And it can, sometimes, but some people think this is the only way to make a deep character. Now, the villain themself is deep. The fact that someone has these thoughts that are, to everyone else, "bad" or "wrong" and believes them to "good" or "right" is deep and complex in itself.

The villain's reasoning, for example. They think they're doing something good. Sometimes it's "For The Greater Good" (Gellert Grindlewald, anyone?) Or maybe it's only for their own gain, but they still believe what they're doing is right. The idea of evil, in Warriors anyway, is very interesting and complex.

Now, why is it so bad to have a villain with a bad past?

The most obvious reason is that it's overused, including the actual series. Scourge, Tigerstar, Brokenstar, Hawkfrost... They all have experienced one bad experience, or a bad past. Most fanfictions are the same.

But, there's another often overlooked reason.

We've all encountered those toxic Scourge fans who excuse all of the "evil" things he's done. (There's no problem with liking Scourge, the problem is when his "evil deeds" are excused and overlooked)

Now, some of those fans act like that because they're those pathetic

stans who can't admit that their favourite did wrong. But some fall into the more alarming category.

These other fans (bare in mind that this isn't limited to Scourge fans) actually believe that it's okay for Scourge to murder, and hurt, because he had a bad past.

Do you know how toxic this kind of thinking is? It's terrible. Mental illness/bad past gives a reason, a cause behind and action, but never an excuse.

Mental illness/bad past gives a reason, a cause behind and action, but never an excuse.

Repeat that. Over and over.

What's terrible is that apparently one of the Erin's have said "Don't judge Scourge (it may have been another villain, but I'm almost certain it was Scourge) too harshly, he had rough start to life!"

Do you know how disgusting that is? That is enforcing the toxic belief onto people that it's okay for people who have had a bad past, have been abused, or have a mental illness to hurt, or murder, or commit some sort of crime.

It's also bad because the majority of people who read Warriors are young, generally 11-12. There are people as young as eight who read the series, I myself started at nine. Younger kids are easily influenced, even at fourteen, I am.

These children, through seeing that every villain has some sort of bad past that corrupted them, in fanfictions and in the actual series will start to think those toxic thoughts that I originally mentioned.

We need kids to understand that that isn't true. That people, no matter their circumstances (unless it's self defence, of course, or any occasional exception) should be held accountable for their actions. Mentally Ill, bad past, or completely healthy, whoever they are and whatever they've through.

Let's stop with those overused bad-backstory villains and let's bring in what villains usually are: normal people, just with bad beliefs.

Prophecies

Wow okay.

Prophecies.

The main problem with them is that they're overused, and not just in fanfictions.

They main problem is that they're usually very obvious.

They're supposed to be vague .

I read a fanfiction recently that is pretty popular, if I said the name y'all would know it. I'm not going to say the name, not because I'm a nice person, just because I'm incredibly selfish and don't want to get yelled at.

Why? Because I fucking hated it. And most seem to enjoy it?

The plotline was pretty overused and they portrayed mental health pretty badly. But the one thing they got right? The prophecy.

I can't say too much, but there was basically two cats involved, one would be good and the other bad. Main character finds, to his shock, that he is the "bad" cat. As it turns out, he was actually good, the prophecy was made to trick you.

Y'all might've figured it out.

While it was semi-obvious what it was about, that trick was actually pretty cool.

Obvious prophecies are ridiculous. They're so annoying! Do not mention the character's prefix (or suffix) in your prophecy. If their name is Beeclaw, don't say "the insect.." Don't make it obvious what will happen.

In most prophecies, there's an evil cat and a good cat (who's the

main character) and it tells of the main character defeating the evil cat. Stay away from this one!

I try to stay away from prophecies in general, mainly because they're the base of many plots, and are very overused. What happened to omens? Visions?

Prophecies can be amazing if written correctly.

But they're usually not.

How difficult is it to write a prophecy?? I mean, how? (Maybe it's easy for me because I love writing poetry but I don't know, it's pretty easy? I could help y'all with prophecies? Mine are probably shit anyway but?)

Dudes, please. If you're going to write about a prophecy, put in a lot of effort. I love dark prophecies, "Blood will spill blood" was one of the best prophecy lines in the whole series. Maybe even the best.

Gods, maybe even make your character evil, and write a prophecy about them. Even better, your protagonist doesn't think that they're evil, because as I've said before, people don't do things when they know they're wrong. (Unless they're just being petty lmao)

Don't go with "**The Moon will rise against the Oak, and all will be revealed**" If Moonshade defeats the evil Oakclaw. Go with "**The moon will rise, the forest will fall, and blood will soak the bark. Veiled secrets cannot reside, truth sings like a lark**"

Holy shit that was bad, but you get the idea. Also moon is a forbidden prefix, so...

"**Concave voices echo, lilac streaked skies will tumble**, **awakening the beasts. Crushing the spine, breaking the bones, blood will prevail.**" How would you interpret that one, compared to "**Burdock and Sand will tussle, destruction will reign after the Herb's victory?**"

Love At First Sight

Ah, Love at first sight. How many (if not most) characters form relationships in the series, and in fanfics.

I personally don't believe in love at first sight. Frankly, it's not love. Sure, you might feel mutual romantic or sexual attraction.. But that isn't love. Not yet.

I don't care that much if this is included in background characters. But please don't use it for your main characters!

Why, young kits? Because it's boring. Whoop, there it is. The cold, hard fact. As a reader, I don't want to know attractive Cypresstail is. I want a development, one that gives me time to fall in love with the ship. I want to see actual development!

People don't just fall in love. You've got your loved enemy - to - lover, friend - to - lover, even your acquaintances - to - lovers. Most romantic relationships nearly all (probably all) have a stage of friendship before lovers. Heck, this time might be a suggestive flirty time, but they're still friends... Of a sort.

Really get into that relationship development. Include fights, they're inevitable. Include adorable ship moments. You'll want to have "dates" like running, walking through the territory, swimming, hunting together, even play fighting together. Have them make their own Clan like Lionpaw (Lionblaze) and Heatherpaw (Heathertail) did. Or they could even create a whole new social structure. Just... Have some dates. Include deep moments, like learning what really goes on inside each other's heads - their insecurities, worst and best memories, any "dark" thoughts (Don't do the whole "I'm so depressed and suicidal, I'm going to cut myself, I wanna die!!1! shit. That's not how depression, being suicidal, or self harm works at all. Note there are other forms of self harm than cutting.)

Just.. Develop it. Encounter setbacks that impact the two

permanently. Have beautiful ship moments. Develop the characters in the relationship, how do they grow and change as the relationship impacts them?

And anyway, if they're in the same Clan, they will have known each other already. So how would it be love at first sight anyway?

_____

A/N:

Merry Christmas, my dudes, thank you for reading this far.

Also this r e a l l y doesn't feel like Christmas. Just a mixture of nostalgia and sadness tbh. Oh well.

Last thing from me today, I made a Clan on Instagram (I don't usually roleplay on Wattpad, I do on Instagram) and it's @original.ShadowClan and there's also the other three Clans so go and join? ;)

Sorry y'all, I self promote way too much.

Bias

By the title, y'all will probably think I'm talking about the massive bias towards ThunderClan in the Warriors series.

But that's actually not what I'm talking about.

You see, while a bias towards ThunderClan happened in the actual series, thankfully, the fandom knows what's up.

But we have a little bias ourselves.

RiverClan.

They seem to be everyone's favourite Clan, and are usually the main Clan in Fanfictions.

Why?

Probably because they like water.
That's why so many of us are sorted into RiverClan. Because most humans like water. But the actual traits of the Clans are what's important.

I believed I was RiverClan for a while, until I realised my above point, and looked around at the traits of the Clans and concluded that I was ShadowClan.

Now let's talk about fanfictions.

RiverClan are the main Clan in most fanfictions that include the canon Clans.

This annoys me personally, because what about ShadowClan and WindClan?

WindClan rarely get representation. They need it too! WindClan have a fascinating culture, they have tunneling, for example. Think of the Outlook Rock, think of the endurance, how they are the mist

quick-witted among all the Clans.

And ShadowClan too. Think of the tunnel under the Thunderpath, think of the carrionplace. Think of the pride they feel in their Clan, think of how goddamned strong they are! They survived two fucking tyrants almost in a row.

And even ThunderClan doesn't get much representation in fanfics, but that's not really a problem, because of the actual series.

I really wish ShadowClan and WindClan got better representation, more than evil and weak. WindClan in particular.

This is short as fuck, but I wanted to address this.

Bullying

I'd love to be complaining about people writing bullying wrong.

But I'm not.

I don't have nearly enough experience with bullying to know what's written right, and what's written wrong. I've only experienced bullying once, and it was the most minor thing ever. I don't even think it can be called bullying. Also, I was five and can't remember it.

Now, what I'm actually talking about, is how the protagonist is always the victim, and never the bully.

I mean, being a victim is good, right? I mean, you're a good person! You become so much kinder because of what you went through.

If that's how you think, listen to me, you little fuck.
You are romanticising abuse/bullying. Being a victim can really fuck you up.

We all know the typical fanfic. Poor, undeserving protagonist is bullied. Protagonist does something amazing, usually saving the life of the bully. Then, the bully feels guilty and apologized, and dear, kind protagonist forgives them. Bonus points if said protagonist goes on to be Clan leader.

That's all fun and games, but we've heard it all before. Not to mention it's unrealistic. You might want to make your protagonist some beautiful, divine, forgiving cat, but can you really forgive someone who hurt you that much? You certainly shouldn't have to.

The thing that makes those kind of stories interesting, is the character development. What are the main character's feelings towards the bully? Do they end up hating themselves (Of course they do, we just love those kind of "Everyone hates me!!1!" Characters. No, really. While it's more acceptable in this case, it's

more likely that your protagonist would have some friends, even if they were being bullied.) Do they end up hating the bully? How do their feelings change and progress throughout the story?

Now that's interesting, but I think it would be good to think about the bully's perspective.

"But I don't want to do that! A bully is bad!"

You're right there, kits. Bullying is a terrible, terrible thing. But the thing is, it would be interesting and unique. You shouldn't be afraid of making your character bad.

Think about it. What is the reasoning behind the bullying? Prejudice? Jealousy? Or are they just so easy to hurt?

What are the bully's feelings while doing it? Satisfaction? Guilt?

Guilt is more common than you think. I'd imagine that you know you're doing terrible things, and you're guilty, but you can't stop.

You could even give them a history. Most bullying fanfics are written as a "They always hated me for no reason!" But that's very uncommon in real life. It's usually between once friends, maybe the victim made the first move.

I think that there needs to be more stories written from this perspective, on the mere idea of originality and interest.

Just make sure you don't romanticise the bully.

Permanent Queens? Who?

.....

Let's sit and talk about this rank that constantly gets forgotten.

Permanent Queens.

Just think Daisy.

Okay, but why is this rank so overlooked? Even I've done it. I just forget it is a thing.

The thing is, people don't recognise it as a real, hard rank. I mean, being a warrior is tough. Everyday you're hunting, some days, you're fighting. Being a medicine cats is tough, you have to deal with injuries and illnesses and prevent deaths.. Both those ranks are rough.

But so is working in the nursery.

Kids are hard. They are shallow, and annoying, and unbelievably selfish. (though there are exceptions)

But kits are also very limited. They can't do much. Listen to stories, play games.. What else? Permanent Queens, or Nursey Helpers, (it doesn't even have an official name?) Have to keep these kits entertained for *six moons*. That's a long time. They have to keep the kits out of trouble, which can be incredibly difficult.

But that's not all they do.

Permanent Queens help out new queens, anxious queens, stressed queens. They not only help and deal with kits, but with the kit's mothers too.

Think about queens who weren't planning to have kits, but ended up with them. Think about first time queens. They would be anxious, and scared, and maybe angry at their unborn, unwanted

kits.

Guess who's going to look after them? Teach them that their kits are a blessing, not a curse. Remind them that soon, they can go back to warrior duties. Guide them through pregnancy and giving birth, and motherhood?

It won't be the medicine cat.

Nursery helper to the rescue!

Who's going to give the tired and stressed queen a break from her noisy bundles of trouble? The deputy? Hell no. It'll be our dear friend, the Nursery helper!

What about older queens, who are having their last litter? They'd be pretty anxious. Or just queens who are prone to anxiety? Permanent Queens are their for them too.

But it's not just the mothers! Who's going to reassure and help the father's through their mate's pregnancy? (Very heteronormative atm, sorry y'all)

Who's going to show them exactly how to help their mate when she's sore and pregnant,(or he, if we have a trans dude pregnant with a kit) or teaching them how to dad. The Nursery helpers are there for them too.

They have a huge job, and are so overlooked, it kills me.

Friendly reminder that gender roles suck and that toms can be permanent queens too.

"You want to be a medicine cat?"

I'm pretty sure we've all read those fanfics.
You know, where the main character wants to be a medicine cat so their siblings bully them.

Why the actual fuck do y'all do this? In the Warriors world, medicine cats are respected. Hell, bullying in itself is uncommon.

In the Warriors society, each Clan is basically a family. They care for one another deeply, though of course everyone has their enemies. The thing is, bullying is unlikely to happen in a Clan anyway (though it does, occasionally) but for someone to be bullied for wanting to become a medicine cat... It makes no sense!

You see, medicine cats are respected among all Clans. They are the cats who heal, the cats who talk to StarClan. They are considered a high rank. Now, what medicine cats really do is lesser known, it's quite a mysterious role to many warriors.

Being a medicine cat isn't exactly considered "cool" by kits, but kits are more likely to tease than bully. Because even if they don't understand the desire to be a medicine, they would still know that medicine cats are very valued and respected by the Clan. They know that medicine cats are a high rank, so they would be more likely to support and even be in awe of their sibling, even if they don't understand why their sibling would rather work with herbs than hunt or fight.

But would kits outright bully their sibling/denmate for wishing to become a medicine cat? Not usually.

This is my problem with Tallstar's Revenge. Despite the fact that I barely remember it, Tallstar, Tallkit at the time, was bulled by Shrewkit (was that his name?) And I'm not so sure if that's very realistic. Now, I don't really care about this that much, it's just that

he was bullied because he was supposed to become a tunneler. However, within WindClan, tunnelers are highly respected! So why was he bullied? Because of the plot, of course!

Now, why do people write this in their fanfics? Well, it's generally written - scratch that, **always** written from the bullied kit who wants to be a medicine cat. Why? Because people do the shitty thing off "My main character has to have a tragic life, so they'll be bullied! That always makes a tragic but good character!"

Do you know how much I hate this? Y'all need to stop making your character a victim in a sad attempt to get people to like them more.

Being bullied should not be used to make your character tragic, as it is a terrible thing that shouldn't be romanticised. Not to mention that it *doesn't make sense* for your character to be bullied because they want to be a medicine cat. A few words of misunderstanding, perhaps, but full out bullying? No.

Seriously guys. Stop this.

Small Things That Annoy Me

Welcome to a small list of things that annoy me in Warriors fanfictions..

- **"I hate going on dawn patrols!" "Partridgeclaw groaned as he awoke at dawn, remembering he was on the dawn patrol." "Dusk is falling. You must be tired, Godwitpaw."** No. Cats are crepuscular. They are most active at dawn and dusk, no one should be beginning to sleep at dusk or be complaining at dawn. This is in a realism sense, of course.

- **"It was nightfall, and everyone was asleep." "Cootstep adored sunhigh, he always felt so active and alive!"** Cats are far more active at night then at day. Cats sleep for 12-16 hours a day. However, in Warriors, it would have to be less, but it's still reasonable to expect that dear old Cootstep would be feeling sluggish around sunhigh, and not everyone would be sleeping at night. There should at least be a moonhigh patrol - remember Into The Wild?

- **"Wow, Jayfeather! It's so cool you had a romance with Half Moon! ...What relevance did it have to the plot, again?" "Oh Cherryflame, I love you! Please tell me, what's the point of our romance?"** Unnecessary romances. Who says a good fic needs romance? If Cherryflame and Snailstar are going to have a romance, it shouldn't just be there because you want a cute ship, or you want precious Cherryflame to have a powerful mate to make her seem desirable. It should have some relevance to the plot, even if it's just to give your character some development. (Cute ships are great but you still need relevance!!)

- **"Hi, I'm Nettlemask, and my kin are rarely mentioned, because it's not like family matters in the Warrior's society at all!" "Firestar, the cat of morality, is the reason family is important in ThunderClan, but it's never going to be mentioned despite its clear importance to the development of ThunderClan, and**

the fact that it's far more interesting than a book about fucking Tigerheart" Family is extremely important in the Clan society, and is never mentioned in fanfics. Why? It appears that in the Clans, family is valued (Think of Leafpool and Squirrelflight's connection. Think of how Tigerstar's crimes affected the way Bramblestar was perceived through his entire life.)

- "**Wow, a prophecy about me, the protaganist, who would've guessed!**"
"**Briartail, guess what? I'm the chosen one! I have a prophecy about me where I save the world, though there was nothing that set me apart from the others. I was chosen because i'm the main character, haha!**" This annoys me so much. Why is every main character the special one in the prophecy? Most people would answer "It makes things interesting. What would it be about if there was a prophecy but the protagonist wasn't in it?" It can be very good, if written well. I once read a book series where the main character had a prophecy about them, but then they were imprisoned and nothing could be done.. and then their sister came to save the day and it turns out the prophecy was always about the sister, not the protagonist. I also started reading this fic where everyone worshipped a kit who was prophesized about.. but the main character was her sister. It wasn't very well-written, but it had a good concept.

- "**Wow, i'm so suicidal and depressed and I'm going to scream it until the pretty she-cat falls in love with me and I'm okay.**"
"**Hi so i'm 'insane' but the second the super-handsome tom Larkface falls in love with me, he'll fix me.**" Thankfully this isn't so common anymore, but this is one of the shittiest things an author/writer can do. No one can "fix your ins*nity" (Which the people who write this don't even know what ins*nity is) and no one can "cure your depression" by falling in love with you. You may feel slightly happier, but you'll still be depressed. Looking at you, popular fic that I mentioned in my "Portraying Mental Illnesses" chapter.

- "**I'm a beautiful silver tabby she-cat with blue eyes and my mate is a handsome dark tabby!**"
"**I'm the main character, so I am very attractive, naturally.**" Do..

do we really need to include beauty standards in fanfictions about cats, unless it's a significant part of worldbuilding? I mean, in the books, some cats are noted to be attractive, like Silverstream or Spottedleaf. But really, is it necessary to make every she-cat beautiful and every tom handsome? Don't do the young adult novel approach to Warriors - "I'm either very beautiful or i'm plain but everyone loves me anyway." Seriously. Don't be afraid to include a character who's considered "ugly." And don't make it stereotypical.

- "**I'm a female protagonist so my personality has to either be shy and floppy, or reckless and stubborn (In other words, a carbon copy of Squirrelflight)**"
"**I'm Kestreltooth and toms are either the friendly, bumbling friend, or hot, dark and mysterious**" Seriously? These kind of personalities make me want to explode. Have some fic-writers ever met real people? Or do they just sit in a corner in a basement and dream of the outside world.. filled with people without flaws and utterly boring and unrealistic personalities?

I'm probably going to go into full rants about some of these. They annoy me sO much.

Punishments

We're still on the bullying subject, everyone. This point is something pretty important, and thank you to horrordays- for pointing it out.

Bullies in Warriors fics rarely get punished for what they did.

Why is that?

In a Clan, it's very unlikely - fuck it, it's impossible to keep bullying a secret. Hell, it was mentioned in the books that it's impossible to keep a secret.

(@ anyone who mentions Leafpool and Squirrelflight - that whole thing was unrealistic as fuck. Cats would've known what a pregnant cat looks like, and would've been able to see that Leafpool is pregnant, and Squirrelflight is not. They've all seen plenty of pregnant queens before.)

Bullying would be noticed. I've seen countless fics where the main character is bullied, and it happens at camp. Seriously? If you were being bullied in your own fucking house, I'm pretty sure someone would notice.

Now, Clans aren't like the real world. Clans are basically one giant family. (Quite literally too - just ask ThunderClan) I've said before that bullying would be unlikely to occur in the first place, and that it would be noticed.

So what happens then? Well, punishment, of course! Hang on... that never happens in fics, does it?

Why the fuck. Is this some useless attempt to make your characters more tragic? I'm pretty sure we can all agree that bullies do need some punishment. (Though, I sympathize with some, it depends on the motive, etc. If you just want to hurt - fuck you. If you don't like what you're doing but can't stop, then.. I don't know. I have

conflicting opinions.I haven't been bullied, so i'm pretty clueless to what it feels like.)

The fact is, in fics, bullies are usually portrayed with one motive, one reasoning - to add tragedy to your protagonist's story. I'm fully ready to rant about this alone, but I think I already have, and that's not the point of this.

So since these bullies have no motive other than to hurt, they should be punished, right? Right. So why doesn't it happen? In a Clan, someone would notice. And if they did, they'd usually talk to the leader, and the leader would usually make sure that they talk to the bully, punish them, sort things out.

It never happens just for the tragedy. It's frustrating, and seriously fanfic writers, step up your game! It adds some interest into the story, and some justice.

Bully's who hurt for the sake of hurting need to be punished, they need to learn that their actions were wrong. Hell, get the medicine cat to give them a counselling session. Make sure they learn that what they did isn't okay, and why.

It's toxic thinking. If younger children read all these fics with bullying in it, and notice that no one ever gets punished, then it will start to normalize. It sounds dramatic, but really, kids can be easily influenced. I know I am.

It's better that way.

Oblivious.

[image]

Ah. You see this is most fanfictions, and many books. Someone, usually the protagonist's friend, falls in love with them. But the protagonist is oblivious! They just can't tell! But of course, everyone else can and teases them about it, but no one tells our poor, darling protagonist what's really going on.

This wouldn't be a problem, in fact it doesn't matter, albeit the fact that it's incredibly annoying.

I don't want to read the same thing over and over again! I want something different. I don't want to know what's going to happen next!

Now, there is absolutely nothing wrong with this in a political sense. Nothing. The problem lies in the fact that it's just boring writing.

Why don't you switch it up a bit? Have the roles reversed! Your character could have a crush the size of Silverpelt on this other person, but this person has no idea, and it's infuriating!

Or better yet, your character could know exactly who has a crush on them, and how they react to them is up to you.

Or perhaps, you go with the above, just reversed!

Perhaps someone, either your protagonist or their "love interest" actually don't become mates. Perhaps they don't even have a relationship! One of them could decline. Be realistic.

Or maybe your protagonist doesn't even have a romance. That's completely fine and valid. I have a few fics planned where the protagonist doesn't feel the need for romance. And that's great!

So, this is one short rant on something that's really annoying me.

Seriously. Most crushes are really obvious. Hell, your protagonist could hear it through others, you can't keep secrets in Clans!

Seriously guys. Just keep your romances interesting.

Here's an unrelated picture of my cat, simply because this book needs more positivity, and she's so beautiful! Also because I needed this to have higher word count. I have no shame.

Female Protagonists Personalities

[image]

There is something really annoying with the way female protagonists are written, and it's really prevalent in Warriors fanfics. This rant is going to be very angry because I just googled my favourite Grey's Anatomy character's personality type and I found the worst spoiler ever. I'm actually crying wtf.

In warriors fanfics, we all want strong female protagonists, right? Well, the majority of them can be summed up in two characters.

Spottedleaf.

Squirrelflight.

Now don't get me wrong. I actually kind of like one of these characters. But their personalities are very overused.

Spottedleaf type characters are the shy, compassionate, kind, everyone-loves-me, flops. There's nothing wrong with having a shy and kind character - hell, I'm shy (socially anxious) and kind (or just a massive infp) but don't make them so much of a flop. Give them some negative traits! Give them something that sets them apart. Perhaps she's submissive? Passive? Dogmatic? Materialistic? Venal?

Squirrelflight characters are the oppoiste. The spunky characters who only listen to themselves, are very outspoken and annoying as fuck. They have negative traits, but for some reason these traits are treated like they're positive and everyone loves this character anyway. Can we just make these characters less generic? Their negative traits need to be recognised. Maybe they're aggressive rather than assertive. Perhaps they're insensitive as hell. Maybe they consider their intellect their best asset? Maybe they're diplomatic?

Okay, seriously. The floppy personailties are straight up boring. They're a Mary-Sue, and yes, Spottedleaf fans, despite being a stalker-pedophile, she was a massive Mary-Sue. If you created an oc with her personality, you would be slaughtered. Especially if you're thirteen or younger. I mean, really. These characters are limper than lettuce. They're shallow and have no depth whatsoever. Please don't go with this archetype.

As for our spunky Squirrelflight characters, she's not exactly a Mary-Sue, but she's borderlining. She has negative traits such as shallowness. Impulsivity and spontaneity are neutral, and by the way Squirrelflight acts, they're negative. And of course, the fanfiction characters with this archetype follow suit.

There are three main problems about it.

One, they're already characters. You copied their personalities. If you copied their name, then everyone would throw you into a sun. How dare you copy "*poor, gorgeous, Squirrelfight!*"

The second thing is that they're overused. In just about every book series.

And the third thing is that they're boring as fuck and no one likes them.

It's okay to have that as a base for your character - just make them more unique and different.

Blackbird out.

I'm just going to have a picture of my cat in every chapter because she needs to be shared with the world.

Loves Heals Illness

Oh lord.

Anyone with a mental illness will want this trope to die.
In fact, if you're a decent human being, you'll want this to be shunned too.

You know when a character has a mental illness, or a past trauma that affects them? Yeah? Well, naturally it's a major part of their life. So what happens when they find love? They become instantly cured, right...?

Fuck no.

Let's say that Breamwish has social anxiety. Breamwish has fallen in love with Tigertail, and the two are happy.

But that doesn't mean that Breamwish's SAD (Social Anxiety Disorder) is gone. That doesn't mean that he's neurotypical now.

Being in a loving relationship isn't going to help him whatsoever. He will still be scared to talk to his Clanmates. He will still walk with his eyes glued to the ground because he can't make eye contact with someone. He will still take his fresh kill into somewhere in his territory where he is alone because he's terrified of people watching him eat. He will still be the quiet one at the back of border patrols. He'll still spend ages crafting the perfect comment when his Clanmates are having a conversation.

Being in a relationship will not change that. Just because he became comfortable enough around Tigertail to become mates with her, doesn't mean that his terror of his Clanmates will stop.

Echofur had BPD - Borderline Personality Disorder. She is currently in a relationship with Petalfall.

Echofall would not stop over attaching herself to people. Her

overwhelming terror of abandonment would not go away, it would continue to manifest itself into behaviours that push people away. She would still have extreme/intense mood swings. "Borderline Personality Disorder as an illness about pain, fear, and struggling to cope with all of that. It's almost like a wounded animal." Being in a relationship would not "fix" Echofur.

It would be a difficult relationship, a roller coaster, but if Petalfall and Echofur try hard enough, they can make it.

Acornface has OCD. And he's fallen in love with Appleclaw. But his OCD doesn't go away just because he met Appleclaw. He still has compulsions and intrusive thoughts. They are still very hard to cope with. He still has to do everything perfectly because if he doesn't, he will be sent to the Dark Forest. He still has to check on his kin constantly because if he doesn't, they'll be killed by badgers. He still has to hoard leaves and shells, because if he gives any of them up, the Clan will be destroyed.

He may love Appleclaw. And Appleclaw loves him. But he still has OCD.

Comfreynose has depression (major). They are in a poly relationship with Sedgetail and Magpiestorm. Comfreynose loves their mates. But Comfreynose still has depression. They are not going to magically recover. They still won't be able to feel positive feelings. They still feel lethargic, and minor (and major) tasks are still very difficult to them, the tasks still drain them. They still feel hopeless. But they love their mates.

While love can impact a mental illness (very slightly) and mental illness will affect love greatly.

But whatever happens, love does not heal mental illnesses.

This is very damaging. I once read a book about a girl with social anxiety. It was going well! Until she met a boy. Then, suddenly, everything was fine.

This made me both furious and sad. Despite social anxiety as being one of the most commonly diagnosed mental illnesses (in the U.S,

anyway) there are very little books about it. This was the first one I'd seen! And the author had fucked it up completely.

So please. In your fics, never, ever do the whole "love cures illness" trope. It's deadly.

"Everything is wrong and I'm the only one who knows"

This trope makes me so fucking pissed off.

It's ridiculously common in young adult novels, dystopia in particular.

There's always some terrible situation. Being forced into live as an assassination, having society govern your choices, etc. All the citizens are unaware that the situation is bad, but our amazing protagonist always understands that the situation is wrong, and fights for it.

Basically, the protagonist is the special one who can save the day.

I don't know if any of you have ever read Matched or Delirium (I didn't finish either of the series) but these books are one of the only books I know of that haven't used this trope.

In Matched, all choices are made by the society. However, the main character (Cassia ?) doesn't initially realise how wrong the situation is, and it takes meeting Ky for her to understand.

Another example is Lena from Delirium. Her life is also dictated by society, and love is a disease. Lena doesn't think anything is wrong. Her friend, Hanna is the one who finds it wrong. Lena later understands with the help of both Hannah and Alex.

The point is, they are not the ones who understand it. This is Mary-Sue like behaviour.

Now, generally the protagonist needs to understand that everything is wrong eventually - otherwise the story is usually quite boring. It's when they always know, right from the start/very early on, and they're a perfect little hero.

Let's look at Tris from Divergent. Now in Allegiant, I absolutely hated her. When Tobias trusted that girl who ended up bombing the place, (I forgot her name) Tris knew right from the start that aforementioned girl was untrustworthy. She was a complete Mary Sue in this right, because this girl had given Tris no reason to distrust her, and everyone else trusted her.

Now, steering away from these examples and onto fanfiction.

It's ridiculously annoying ! I'm currently reading an amazing book, however the character has a specific rank, and she is the first to realise that the system is wrong.

The book is great, but... no. This shouldn't happen. Your character shouldn't be the first, it's ridiculous. There is absolutely no need to make your character even more special. How about making her the first, but not the last - make her fail! Or make her the last but not the first. Her neither!

This is a strange one but it really irks me.

It just feels very Mary Sue-ish.

The problem also lies in the lack of development. This has a lot to do with internal character development and pacing of the book.

Bare in mind that the book I'm reading does nor focus as much in development as it should - though the author seems to believe that they're developing their character right.
(If you know which fic I'm referencing, do not state it !! It is actually pretty good, and has some great concepts.)

Their pacing is also far too fast, so that effects it.

Among all this rambling, the main point is, don't do that trope. It's overused, and very boring.

ThunderClan, ThunderClan.

Why is it that every Clan in every fic just.. channel ThunderClan.

Let me explain.
There are some specific things that ThunderClan does or has. Specific things - they're noted to be things that the other Clans don't do or have.

But many of these turn up in fics.

This isn't a major problem, it's simply annoying.

The first thing is a forest - a deciduous, english forest.

I love english forests as much as the next person. I've only gone to England once, but it really was beautiful.

But not every Clan resides in England. There are so many other types of forest.
A taiga, for example.
A boreal forest, coniferous forests, american forests, (I'm assuming this is a thing, my lack of knowledge about other countries is worrying.) New Zealand forests (I'm going to write this one day and no one can stop me) as well as Australian forests, etc. They're all different and interesting, so why not write about one of them ?

Or why not write about a forest at all ?
How about an African savannah (I'm taking this too because yes) a gorge, a moorland, some other type of grassland, a mountain, a badland, desert, island, a tunda... anything ! Who says your Clan has to be traditional ? Cats don't live in an African Savannah but I'm going to write some there.

This, however, is getting a lot better ! Honestly is more roleplaying that have troubles with this. (I mean Instagram roleplays, that's where I do the majority of my roleplaying.)

The Hunter's Crouch.

This is quite possibly my biggest annoyance.

The Hunter's Crouch isn't used outside ThunderClan. Made and used by them and them only. You won't catch ShadowClan doing that. You won't catch old SkyClan doing that, despite the fact that they lived in the same type of territory as ThunderClan.

So why is IceClan all getting into Hunter's Crouches ?

Is that HoneyClan I see doing strange crouches ?

I sure hope not.

Use a crouch as a hunting technique by all means, but try to be original. Please.

Another thing is values.
Not all Clans share the same values.

I mean, fanClans don't have to follow the same Warrior Code for a start !

But let's take a look into ThunderClan's values. They're very nosy nobles who value family over their Clan.

Family.

This was a trait that Firestar brought into the Clan. I could analyse that but that's a different book for a different time.

In short, in Bluestar's time, this expectation to care about family wasn't needed. Father's didn't matter, queens didn't even have to reveal the father, and Thrushpelt was praised for claiming kits were his own and doing approximately nothin**g else.**

But in Firestar's ThunderClan, father's are expected to take care of their kits. Spiderleg is shamed for doing what most did in Bluestar's ThunderClan.

And it seems almost all fics and Clans mirror Firestar ThunderClan.

And if you don't spend so much time hating on Warriors and (over) analyzing it like me, you might miss the last one.

I mean, it didn't matter that much, I was just proposing a point.

The shitstorm over my comment on Thrushpelt will begin.

Disabled Cats + Ableism

Whatever you do, don't treat disabled cats like the Erin's did.

Ableism is a huge issue in Warriors. This can be controversial, so let me say a few things.

1.) I do not like the Warriors series anymore, but I like reading fanfics, and writing them.

2.) This doesn't mean that you can't like them. The series is problematic as hell, but at the end of the day, it's your choice if you just like reading and enjoying the series, or analyzing it deeply, and you shouldn't shame others for what they do. You can like something that's problematic, but you should admit that they're problematic. Hell, I like Halsey, and she's pretty problematic. (But sometimes people cross the line, like Benedick [Benedict] Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman. Go on "Your Fave is problematic" in Tumblr and search them.)

3.) I'm fairly educated on ableism, and both my twin and I are disabled. I have a pretty good idea that I know what I'm talking about, but feel free debate things with me !

(Note: This is focused on cats with physical disabilities.)

Now, let's get into the issues with ableism in Warriors.

Ableism in Warriors: Disabled characters cannot be Warriors, and must retire to the medicine den or Elder's den. There is only three that didn't (I'm pretty sure) - those being Nightstar, (my lord and saviour) Brightheart, and Deadfoot. If not, then they're killed off. Fun.

How this is ableist: Super unrealistic, and just.. you know, ableist. It's enforcing the idea that disabled cats cannot be as good as able cats. (Bare in mind this is unintentional and subtle, but still an

issue.) Disabled cats can be Warriors, just like abled cats. Blind cats can hunt. They can navigate their way around the territory, though I doubt that they could fight. Deaf cats can hunt and fight. Cats use body language instead of vocal speech in real life, though in the series they use mainly verbal speech to communicate. Cats with broken legs, and similar physical disabilities can still maneuver themselves around, and hunt!
Cats with paralysis? It's harder to think about. Some may even be completely immobile. While for many (depending on the paralysis) can't be warriors, some could? But there are some ways to get around this.

How to avoid this in your fic: Simple. Utilise nonverbal communication. Show that disabled cats have the ability to be Warriors. If it isn't possible, create a rank of more that disabled cats can do, that is just as fulfilling and important as a warrior - your fic doesn't have to be exactly like the series!

Ableism in Warriors: Brightheart was only able to get through her early days because of Cloudtail, he was the only one who bothered to check in her. (Aside from Fireheart, of course.) It didn't focus on Brightheart herself, or her overcoming internalized ableism. It turned into a way to get Cloudtail and Brightheart together. No one (except Cloudtail) even said anything about Brightheart being beautiful, nothing at all. People called her ugly, and she got stares (reasonable for cats like Princess and Daisy who hadn't seen extensive injuries) but no one except Cloudtail ever reassured her. While her disability was used as a good plot device in terms of the dogs, it should've focused more on Brightheart herself, her development because of the injury. It became ableist the moment her disability was disregarded and used only as a way to get her and Cloudtail together.

How To Avoid This In Your Fic: Don't use disabilities are mental illnesses as plot devices when it's simply going to focus on love, or going to highlight the ugliness of the disability, or always highlight it in a negative manner.

Ableism In Warriors: Brightflower was literally sent to the Dark Forest because she "wasn't sane enough to accept that Yellowfang didn't kill her kits" and Lilywhisker for "being bitter about her

disability." I don't really need to give an explanation for why this is fucking pathetic. I mean, if we're sending cats to the Dark Forest for bitterness over disabilities, say goodbye to your precious Jayfeather.

How to avoid this in your fic: Don't put cats in the Dark Forest for shitty ableist reasons.

Ableism In Warriors: The Clans don't offer adequate support for cats with disabilities. The Clans are set up to be a society where there is no place for a cat who is disabled. Aside from being an elder or a medicine cat, they have nowhere to go. Disabled cats who do try to become warriors are not accommodated for, they're expected to be the perfect, able warrior. Jayfeather wasn't given enough support when he trained as a warrior. While the Clan tried, with Longtail and Brightheart, but the other Clans didn't think about not attacking him. They didn't think about "hey, he won't be able to fight us. This isn't his fault, we can live without attacking one cat." No. They attacked him anyway. The Clans never thought "hey, maybe we need to adapt our ranks for disabled cats." This would've been okay if it had been to target ableism. But it wasn't.

How to avoid this in your fic: Make sure your disabled cats get the right support. Fit them into your Clan society without forcing them to become something they don't want to be. Create an equal society, one better than our own.

Just a note - if anyone mentions normal cat instincts, I will eat you. They're anthropomorphized to an extreme; they're humans in cat suits.

Blackbird out.

BloodClan fics

Please remember to keep all limbs inside the roller coaster, kids, you don't want to cut yourself on the edgyness as we go past.

Ah, BloodClan. The dudes who appeared in one book, fought the Clans, disbanded after Firestar murdered their leader, and appeared once more in the overrated Scourge book.

Now, BloodClan themselves are fine - They provided an interesting drama, and Scourge himself is a fairly interesting character. (Though really, giving him a Tragic Backstory wasn't needed at all.) However both Scourge and BloodClan have been ruined by the fandom - Scourge is now depicted as some edgy emo, and BloodClan this edgy bunch of murderers.

I personally have never read a BloodClan fic, but I did have a nosy around the tag and read summaries.

And as I expected and have been told, they're absolute shit.

They all seem to be written by edgy eleven year olds with no writing skills. No, seriously. The first one I see that isn't a roleplay? It's about a she-cat chosen to become Scourge's mate, because he needs an heir. From what I know of it, the she-cat believes that Scourge is a shithead, but I'm assuming she falls in love with him anyway. After a read of the last few chapters - yes, she does.

This has been done countless times before. No one wants to see another goddamn fic about someone wanting to get in Scourge's pants, or more likely, Scourge wanting to fuck the main character, because y'all fuckers just love to make your oc's the type that everyone loves. They're just whole fics of mate desperation. There's nothing wrong with romance, or books centered around it - just for the love of Nightstar (My lord and savior) make it interesting. P l e a s e.

Not to mention that they all start off as kits. WhY ? Are we

supposed to feel connected to the protagonist or something ? I really don't see the point. Kits usually tend to be boring because as children, their personalities haven't fully developed yet.

And then there are the Revenge Of BloodClan fics. Seriously ? There's no need for that. It's dull. We've seen it all before. And there are so many of these. Literally, it's all I can see aside from roleplays.

And then there are the Random She-cat Who Decides To Rebuild BloodClan Fics. These are so irrational. These cats have grown up being taught that the Clan system is right and superior and better than all other lifestyles. They've been taught to hate BloodClan. So why do they suddenly decide to rebuild BloodClan. Now these have potientual if written correctly. I mean, I was brought up Christian and now I'm an atheist. But people miss out the important and interesting part of this concept - the change. What makes someone who is raised to be one thing, choose to be another ? What changes inside them, what makes them see ?

Now, there was one that caught my eye, though it was written badly and only the concept was any good. It was what happens to BloodClan after Scourge's death. And that isn't even that complex - that's how low the standards are.

Seriously, at least try to be original. Or better yet, don't write about BloodClan at all.

Shipping Ocs With Canon Characters

[image]

I bet y'all clicked on this thinking "hey, Blackbird's going to be ranting about how terrible shipping oc's with canon characters is !"

Nope.

I actually support shipping oc's with canon characters, which is an unpopular opinion, I know. But I believe the reason it's considered so terribly is simply because of the bad writing of the ships.

The first thing is, everyone ships their oc with Scourge. Everyone. If not, some sort of protagonist or "desirable" character. Jfc I hate this. This is the reason why all us oc + canon shippers look bad. Because this is really fucking pathetic. No one wants to read more "Scourge's Mate" fanfics. Please no.

If you do this, I swear, you'll look like one of those "XDDD Scourge-bae!!!" Eleven year olds.

I mean, you get Lionblaze ones, the Brokenstar ones, the Hawkfrost ones... Can y'all just stop?

And they're all straight female Mary-Sues. Let's just. Too many blue-eyed silver tabbies with heart-eyes Scourge mooning around after them.

The relationships are never developed ?? Like it's always: "Oh Moonsong, you're the prettiest thing in the entire forest. I, Scourge, will love you forever! Let's have kits now!"

Make it interesting. Maybe your oc falls in love with the canon character, who doesn't love them back yet. Maybe they're already together ? Just spice it up a little !! Make it interesting !

Make a plot ! Perhaps it isn't centered around the romance. Perhaps it is. Either is fine as long as it's done right, not just Scourge + Moonsong taking over the forest Clans and having a shitton of kits.

A short chapter this time, but there isn't really that much to say. Just please please please don't write a shitty oc + canon character shipfic because I'll hunt you down and eat you.

BlackbirdNight (Blackbirdflight + Nightstar) is a great ship but unfortunately the concept isn't widely accepted because of what so many have fucked up. So p l e a s e pull it off correctly because the concept of oc + canon ships are redeemable !!

And here's my Sophie again:

Also a foot.

Insane characters

And why you shouldn't write them.

Insane can considered a slur - an ableist one. This is because it's used in a negative manner to describe someone who's "out of their mind." and often used to describe murderers, or people who commit horrible crimes, all while relating to people in the past who've been mentally ill and have been called insane and chucked in asylums where they underwent trauma. Either way, it's used against those who are mentally ill - particularly people who have experienced psychosis.

Now, the way the fandom describes someone who is insane are characters who kill without emotion, usually possess no empathy and are typically written as edgy. You know, the "psycho, insane killers." (Fun fact- psycho can also be considered an ableist slur due to the derogatory way it's used against people with psychosis, and has a long history with misogyny too.)

This fandom depiction of insanity is immature and inaccurate. Not only is it not what true insanity is at all, but is actually inaccurate to most murderers as well.

What is true insanity? To be blunt, psychosis is the closest you'll get. (Though don't use the term to describe psychosis or I'll eat you.)

And there is actually one cat in Warriors who experiences psychosis, though it's written in the form of a power.

Goosefeather.

Technically, he experienced auditory hallucinations. He saw, heard, even touched things that couldn't be seen, heard, or felt like others. It negatively impaired his life, and went in for over six months - it went in for his entire life. The dude fits the criteria of psychosis.

So your local edgy murder who bathes in blood every night , sharpens their claws on bones, cuts themselves with their own claws (not biologically possible) and murders their entire family isn't really insane.

Goosefeather and cats like him are. Or, the better, non ableist term would be Goosefeather and cats like him are psychotic.

So there you have it.
Short but necessary.

Short Stories

Ah, one-sentence-per-chapter stories, often referred to as short stories. An interesting format of writing originally by @// Warriorzlove,and then immediately latched onto by the fandom.

There is nothing wrong with short stories. The format is interesting, and original. They're fun to write too!

The problem is that they're dreadfully overused. People saw it, they liked it, they used it. And then they overused it. If it were used in moderation - one per person at the most - then it would be okay. It's fine to write one of these, but writing more than say, two, would not be a good idea. They get tiresome eventually.

Some people say it takes less work than lengthy fics, and I'd agree. They're most certainly short, and don't take as much writing, outlining, etc. However they do take a lot of work, and saying that they're really simple is quite rude (especially to the creator) and shouldn't be used to invalidate anyone.

The main issue is that they're all the same. This fandom went through a phase of cannibalism, murder, pedophilia, and all dark things under the sun. Those topics are okay, but once every book is about them, it gets tiring. While there's death and murder in warriors constantly, these types of murders are all carefully planned, not battle-murder.

The only problem is that it's overused, and replacing the longer fics. I think we should try to have a better balance, and even try to think of a different and new format of writing. One interesting one I've seen is @chronalilly's Where The River Bends, which is a wonderful book where each chapter is set in a different p.o.v. No repeats. Now don't copy it, this is just an example. Oddly enough, I thought of doing this format once as well, but wrote it off as too confusing. But Chrona pulls it off !

So they to limit yourself to the number of short stories that you

write, and try to make them original and unique. Even better - think of a new format. Just don't add to the masses of overused ones already.

Representation of Lgbt+ II

One thing that I've noticed is that there's a growing number of lgbt + characters in the Warriors fandom. Perhaps this is a result of the influential Mousedapple, who sadly isn't on Wattpad in the Warriors community, or everyone is simply growing older and more knowledgeable, this is wonderful! It's very good to see.

But there's still some issues.

Some sexualities are still underrepresented, and that's normal. As long as we work on combating this, awareness and representation will grow.

You'll notice that the first version of this chapter is about the lack of representation in warriors fanfics. But now this isn't an issue anymore. The majority of fanfics have lgbt+ characters. This is a good thing!

The problem is, only one type of lgbt+ representation is included. Lgbt+ is more than bi/pan/gay/lesbian cats who get with a cat of the same sex.

Give me aromantic cats.
Give me trans cats.
Give me genderqueer cats.
Give me polyamorous cats!
Give me poly/bi/pan cats ending up with a cat of the opposite sex!
Give me toxic lgbt+ relationships/cats, because being lgbt+ does not necessarily equal good.
Give me bi cats attracted to two genders aside from guys and girls.
Give me *//shock//* straight cats!!

There seems to be some idea that straight cats are terrible! They're too common, they're boring! Straight cis female ocs in particular are treated as if they're a crime.

There is a pressure to have lgbt+ protagonists. In fact, I myself

have felt this pressure and did it! I thought people would like Saving Sable, my fanfiction, more if I made Dawnclaw bisexual, when really I saw her as straight, or heteroflexible at the most. Later on, I can tell you that it really doesn't matter. Do whatever the hell you want! It's your fic. And Dawnclaw's orientation didn't affect the story at all.

This is horrible. If people treated lgbt+ cats like that, would you see that it's unfair? Yes, lgbt+ people need representation and have suffered through years of oppression and discrimination. No, putting down the group as 'boring' and 'common' who haven't gone through that isn't the answer.

I mean, lgbt+ is a minority! While it seems that /everyone/ is gay, that's probably because it's so glorified on the internet. There is supposed to be more straight people than lgbt+ people. That's why lgbt+ is a minority, you assholes.

It's okay to be straight, and it's more than okay to have straight characters. If people try to tell you otherwise, ignore them. They're shitholes. I don't believe that heterophobia is a thing, but there is a developing (negative, harmful) stereotype about heterosexual people that has been rising in this community. We need to shut it down.

If you want to have lgbt+ characters, do it!
If you want to have straight characters, do it!
Portray them equally.

Keep on having that wonderful representation. But eliminate the "straight characters are boring and overused" stereotype. And please include all types of representation!

Unrealistic Names II

I'm sure we can all relate to that feeling we get whenever we see a cat called Angelfeather. That feeling of immediate exasperation, of "another cringey eleven year old." We've all complained about it, or seen someone complain about it. Hell, even this book has a chapter on it.

I mean, it's annoying! It disregards canon, it's just stupid and cringey.

The thing is, it isn't damaging. Do you know what is? When you're a kid, just having fun writing about your favourite books, with your oc called Crystaleyes, and seeing all these people, the older members of the fandom, some of whom you look up to, talking about how horrible ocs like yours are, how bad fics like yours must be, and just how cringey you are. That would hurt a hell of a lot.

There are serious problems in fanfics (and the series) sometimes. Homophobia, ableism, transphobia, etc. These are problems that reflect on real societal issues. But unrealistic names is not one of these problems. You know what is? Cringe culture. And yelling at kids who just want to have fun is mean, and enforces cringe culture.

We're a fandom! We're supposed to be a family! Supporting each other and sharing our love for the series, or the world behind the series. But that isn't what's happened here. This is another rant for another day but it still relates here.

Many older members, like myself, like to take the series seriously. We like things to be professional. But there's a line, and often we cross it. Some things should not be taken so seriously, and naming is one of them.

Just leave people alone and let them have their fun, hmm?

Cannibalism

A while back, the Warriors fandom went through a phase of writing about cannibals. This phase was probably the result of an influential fandom member writing about cannibalism, which many followed suit. In fact, even I've written about it, in brief. In my case, the cannibalism is a symptom of an illness.

The majority of it was about murderer-cannibals, and it was glorified. It was seen as cool, and the person who started the whole thing did support cannibalism, and stated she would do it herself if it were legal. (Cannibalism, not murder.)

I don't want to slam this user, who isn't around anymore, but frankly, this is horrible. There are so many moral issues surrounding cannibalism. Why would you eat another human being? It's physically repulsive.

In fanfictions, it was treated like a cool thing, and let me tell you, that's not at all okay. I spend quite a lot of time in the True Crime Community on Tumblr, because the psychology behind it all fascinates me, but I've seen plenty of people lust after these serial killers/cannibals and condone what they do. It really is disgusting.

Cannibalism is not beautiful . It is not cool . It is disgusting . Morally wrong . Absolutely and utterly horrible .

Seriously, you guys. You're writing characters comparable to people like Albert Fish (killed and ate multiple children, said something along the lines of "I like children. They're tasty.) or Jeffrey Dahmer (we all know what he's done. But even then, y'all are writing about characters worse than this guy. He was disgusted in himself. Repulsed by even his own actions. Yet some of your characters just kill and eat for shits and giggles.) This isn't okay. Cannibalism is bad. Portray it as such. It is a negative thing. At least give a reason, usually a psychological issue like abuse, paraphilia, etc, and then follow it up. The cannibal gets treatment and some form of imprisonment. Maybe exiled, maybe executed.

There's nothing wrong with writing about cannibalism if you want to explore the psychological reasoning behind it. If you want to highlight it as a bad thing, then please, do that! But the moment you write about cannibalism as if it is remotely acceptable, that's when you are glamorising this issue.

So many of you are super against pedophilia, but accepting of cannibalism and the likes. That isn't at all okay. They're heavily intertwined, as cannibalism usually stems from paraphilia, which pedophilia fits under. The double standards aren't right, and we can't glorify and romanticise cannibalism as much as we can't with pedophilia.

Grammar and spelling II

[image]

Now, I don't think there was anything wrong with the first version of this rant, it wasn't structured the best. I don't like that one part of this book at all, because it's me slamming people for using bad grammar and spelling without acknowledging my frequent mistakes in my own work. It feels hypocritical. Was there a need to make this? No. I just want to redo all of them because I'm a terrible person :)

We've all seen fanfics with grammar issues. Spelling issues. That kinda shit. We're all tired of seeing common problems, and we all like to have a moan.

But you know what?

Many people who write with incorrect grammar are young. They're kids! They're just writing because they like it. They're putting their writing out there into the harsh realm of the internet, and they're just here for a good time.

And you know what? That's okay. We shouldn't bitch and moan and attack these people over every mistake. We should encourage them to keep writing. Give constructive criticism. Mention that they could do better with spelling and grammar. But praise them for what they did well. Because these kids could be the next fucking bestsellers and if they're surrounded by negativity, they might just give up. And hey, even if their writing is terrible and they don't grow up into bestselling authors, or even authors at all, they still deserve kindness and encouragement. Because people are allowed to be bad at stuff and do it anyway because they enjoy it.

It's important to remember, we all start from somewhere.

And it's also important to be kind to people who write in english but don't use english as their first language. That takes incredible skill and these people are amazing. They're going to mess up. And

that's okay. They deserve kindness too.

So who should we complain about? Complain about the writer's who think they can do no wrong, and yet make a tom of grammar and spelling mistakes. Especially if they're older. If they think that they're writing is 100% perfect and they're unwilling to grow, that is a bad writer. The only kind of bad writer. These are the people who need to be told improve their goddamn grammar and spelling. Be kind about it, but it's okay to be harsher this time.
And writers who should know better.
Writers who get a good amount of reads, writers who write seriously, and are generally older. If you see these people, tell them they need to improve! Is this last one a giant indirect towards myself, yes it is! I'll admit, I could use grammarly more than I do. I could edit better than I do, but I don't, because I'm lazy. So I deserve all the harsh words I can get!

Whine about the people who deserve it. Leave the kids alone. Let them have their fun. We're all in the same boat here. We're all trying to master the difficult craft of writing, or just having a good time. We should lift each other up, not push each other down. Let's be kinder. Let's be more supportive.

Here's my cat, since I haven't uploaded in so long.

Writing Styles

I love writing styles. They're all so unique and different, and you can tell the writer from their writing style. However, there are two things regarding writing style that frustrate me within this fandom, so...here we go!

One issue is when people just directly copy the Erin's style without having even a bit of their own original style. This is just annoying because they're all the same, and they all blur into one after a while. It's dull and uninteresting. The thing I get complicated on most is my style. It's because it's unique! It doesn't feel like everything you've ever read before. (I hope!) If you directly copy an author, you'll never improve! Take your favourite bits and pieces from different authors, and your style will develop! Take some tips from art - work on little things, one at a time. It's fair enough that things sound similar to the Erin's style, since we're all influenced by them.

Another rising issue is the use of fancy and big words. People use these and call it a style. It isn't. This is the equivalent of drawing something out of perspective (for example, a wolf facing forward with a sideways muzzle) and then instead of fixing it, the artist claims it's their style. There's a difference between art style and incorrect perspective.
Now, as for writing, big/fancy words are all fun and games. If you want to write like this, you can! I've used fancy words before, and I like to think I was among those who started the trend lol. But fancy words aren't a replacement for style. That's vocab use. Style covers the way you write, all of the aspects inside your work. Not just the words you choose to use.

Now, this leads us to the big topic. It's here, motherfuckers. The big one. The bad boy.
Functionality.
How functional is your writing style? What I mean by that is, if you were to publish a full length book, would you be able to sustain it.

Would your style work with writing proper novels?

See, a writing style can be nice to read, but simply not work in an actual book. For example, my writing style is nice to read. I don't mean that to sound egotistical, that's just what I've been told. But in an actual book, it wouldn't work. I rely all too heavily on poetic metaphors rather than all aspects of my writing. So I'm working on it!
This is where big words come in. Yes, they're nice. No, readers don't want to google a word every ten seconds.
Hell, even in fanfiction, no one wants to do this. For example, a writer who writes very heavily on dialogue might seem interesting in fanfiction. It's distinctive and interesting! But would you want to read a book where there are very few physical descriptions? A book where the vocabulary is limited? Of course not.

I don't mean this to sound rude, but there's a lot of nonfunctional writing styles that I see here, or styles that are just plain boring. The good thing is styles are easy to change and fix. Don't focus on publishing now. Focus in making your writing fucking fantastic. (Even if you just write for fun, improving your style is still worthwhile!)
Remember, I am not god. If you don't agree with anything I say in this book, that's totally okay! These are just my opinions and advice. I'm not the most experienced writer by any means.

Happy writing :)

Writing Canon Characters II

In my original version of this, I wrote "Write them right."
Oh, young me. You have a lot to learn. Luckily, current me is a little wiser and open minded.

When writing canon characters, it's very important to write them in character. Don't have them go off and do outrageous things that the character would never do. As much as you may dislike a character, don't write them as an absolute asshole unless that's the point of the story. What I mean by that is, don't go write a fic where Spottedleaf goes around acting like an utter bitch just because you don't like her. However, you could write an au where Spottedleaf is a villain. That being said, I don't think she'd go around being a bitch even then! This is what I talked about in my last version of this, and I think that still stands.

However.

People have different interpretations of characters. One person may absolutely love a character, others will hate them. Someone may believe a character would do a certain action, another might say that's out of character. People have different views and interpretations. For example, I know many people who ship Jayfeather and Briarlight, while I myself can't envision the two having any form of relationship other than platonic. That doesn't mean that any fic featuring BriarJay is out of character, it just means that some people see that particular relationship differently than I do. That's okay. No one is wrong here.

Same goes with actions, as mentioned before. If I wrote a fic with Firestar breaking a rule, some people might say "no, Firestar wouldn't do that, after becoming a leader, he became much more serious and responsible," and another person might argue back "actually, Firestar never lost that sense of fun, he just wasn't a protagonist so we didn't see much of him." Both of these could be correct, because there's nothing in canon that could suggest otherwise.

So while I wouldn't suggest writing a "actually, Bluestar attacks the protagonist because I don't like her" in your fic, I also think there is some ways to get around that. If you really hate Bluestar, write a fanfiction from Thistleclaw's perspective. We all know she isn't really the villain, but from that specific point of view, she is one. If you desperately want to write about your female-oc who was actually Firestar's first love, not Spottedleaf, being attacked by Bluestar because you didn't like her, make it during the time when Bluestar was overtaken by paranoia and believed her whole Clan to be traitors. That way, it's that little bit more realistic. Because no matter if you dislike Bluestar and perceive her actions to be selfish, or if you like her and perceive her actions to be shitty but driven by grief, or whatever you feel towards her, you have to admit that logically, Bluestar isn't going to just attack a random cat in her Clan.

But it's your fanfiction. Your au. You can do absolutely whatever you want. Trust me, I'm in the planning stages of writing an au where Dovewing, Hollyleaf, Jayfeather, and Lionblaze are all in different Clans, and they're part of "The Four." And the timelines are pretty different. That's okay though! It's an au for a reason.

In the end, try and write your characters as in-character as you can. Try to look past your own emotions and analyze the character. Don't be afraid to add depth, especially when they're one of the less developed characters in Warriors, like our lovely Lionblaze with the personality of a piece of soggy cardboard. Inevitably, people are going to disagree with certain portrayals and that's okay. Just have fun with your fanfictions, and if you intend on being a serious writer in the future, or even now, try to take them as seriously as you can, but still have fun with it!

The Problem With FanClans

Listen. When I started writing this book, I believed there was a right and a wrong way of doing anything. I like to think I'm wiser now, and let me tell you - a good writer can pull off just about everything. I can ramble on and on about how my mindset has changed, and now I've realized that policing fanfic is really just shitty, but that's for another time.
Point is, you can do whatever you want. You don't have to write well to write. You can write for fun without worrying about tropes and worldbuilding and all the technicalities of writing. What I complain about in this book - it isn't gospel. You write how you wanna write. That being said, I can preach "do what you want" all I like. That doesn't mean there aren't things you should avoid in your writing, and if you do seriously care for writing and improving, then I'd recommend paying attention to the things I criticise in this book.

Now, that little note over, on to the actual chapter.
The problem with fanclans.
The issue I have with fanclans is that they're all the same. They're carbon copies of the Clans in the books, just with new names slapped over them. This? This is boring. This is uncreative. If we wanted to read about the canon Clans, we would've read an au. Read a fic set in those Clans. But no one clicked on your fic for those things. They came for *your* story. So make your own damn story!

I'm not asking you to worldbuilding some massive Middle Earth type of Clan. You don't have to spend months crafting the next Harry Potter. But it isn't asking all that much to want a world that I, as a reader, can get invested in? Something new and unique?

Why not give your Clan some unique culture? Maybe they have multiple religions? How would that affect a Clan? Perhaps your Clan have a different leadership system, for example the Clan is ruled by specific families of cats within said Clan. (I wonder what

would happen if a cat started killing the kits of those families so that they were unable to produce any heirs...?) What about a Clan that utilises kittypets and twolegs - when food becomes scarce, they eat kittypet food. When a cat has a severe sickness or injury, they find a twoleg to take them to the cutter. Maybe you have a Clan who tries to spread Clan culture and assimilate every cat into the Clan lifestyle. Maybe your Clan has music. Maybe they trade items with other Clans. Maybe, using my version of ShadowClan as an example, they do bone-carving. Hell, you can even have an underwater Clan, as long as you have a realistic explaination, anything goes. This doesn't even touch upon the attitudes and values you could express in your Clan society!

Even just having your Clan in a different territory is helpful! I don't know why y'all are so obsessed with ThunderClan but I'll let you in on a secret. Not every Clan has to live in an english forest. Hell, there are so many different types of forests anyway! I swear I've made a chapter about this but honestly. How about looking into a whole different country. India, Australia, Samoa...there are so many countries with such unique and different types of environments and you choose the basic english forest?

Seriously, it isn't that hard to think of interesting things to add to your world. It's boring, uncreative and lazy writing just copying the original Clans and sticking a new name on it. If you don't want to change anything, then just write something set in the canon Clans. If you don't want to write about the canon Clans, make your own Clans fucking interesting. Y'all. As readers, we want to connect with your whole world. Even if it's just little elements. If you don't want to put in that sort of work, that's fine! Readers are already connected to the lore of the canon world, that's why I'm saying to write about the canon Clans.

Think of it like reading online comics. We don't want your recoloured ocs. We want ocs with unique designs, not just using a base of a canon character. Make your own original and new story or write one that exists in the canon world. Don't take a preexisting idea and slap a new name on it. No one will care about your Clan if it's just ThunderClan 2.0
Seriously, how many of us have complained about blatantly "stolen"

characters that are completely copied off of Silverstream and the works. This is the same thing.

So seriously guys, put in some effort. You say you want to be an author but you won't put in the work. Sometimes it isn't fun! And that's the truth. Writing is hard work, blood, sweat and tears. And in the end, it's rewarding as hell. If you want your work to be taken seriously, you need to be serious about writing. And that means worldbuilding even when it takes more effort than to just have SnowClan, named after Snowstar, set in a english woodland, same ranks as canon, same belief system, same values and traits.

"But Blackbird, it's just fanfiction! It's not that serious!" You're right! Fanfiction absolutely does not have to be serious. But if you want to be an author, I'd recommend taking your fanfictions seriously. It allows you to explore writing, improve on weaknesses and learn how to avoid certain mistakes and grow from them. But that's besides the point.

So, end of all this? Make your Clans original. It doesn't have to be much. Just make them stand out, because I am so sick and tired of reading the same Clan with a different name over and over again.

Smut II

Warriors smut. Yikes.

I think we all know why this is considered disgusting. Not because it's sex - I mean, let's be mature now, y'all - but because they're cats. It's just gross? Roleplaying, writing, reading and overall enjoying cat sex is gross as hell. It isn't zoophilia, but it's pretty damn close. It's just very creepy and morally wrong.

But we know all of this already. Most people are pretty disgusted by it and have read rants before about this. I have an earlier rant about this! I mean, why write another rant on this? The first one was very badly written but at least the message is clear. I could rewrite it but there's no real need to. The thing is, I've been seeing a rise in people defending it and leaving hate on the chapter (though I usually just delete it) so I'm mainly writing this out of site.
So what's something different that I can bring to the table?

Hmm, how about that there's strangely kinky smut? Involving prey, watersports, scat and such? I mean... I could. But that's sort of the same issue as before. Kink? Fine, if that's what you like. But they're cats!! We've been over this.

Why am I choosing to write this again? I've had a few people defending it recently and there is more I want to say about this topic. This has been in my drafts for a couple of months and I don't know what the issue was that I was going to bring up so I'll just bullshit my way through this and hope I remember.

Okay, how about the fact that a huge number of these fics involve rape? And in a way that's written as if it's supposed to be sexy? It isn't to write a realistic rape scene, showing the traumatic experience of the whole thing but instead, it's one cat crying while the other dirty talks them, except the victim eventually loves it and agree to fuck again and everyone's supposed to get off to it. Well, it's certainly a major problem that doesn't get talked about enough but there's still nothing new to say about this.

What about the fact that it's all so inaccurate and promotes unhealthy and incorrect sex education? But no one uses it for sex ed, that would be stupid! It's not that big of a deal. They're just fics. They don't have that much of an impact! Okay, but consider this: they do. Think about it. The Warriors fandom is primarily made up of children. Most of us stumble upon these fics as kids. Note the stumbling part - most people accidentally find these! It isn't like they're hidden away. Warnings don't do anything.

The problem is with young kids finding this, they learn incorrect things about what happens in sex and what they're supposed to feel and do. Sex education and the way sex is treated in our society is pretty terrible. With young kids finding this and getting their only other source of sex information from abstinence-based programs in school (or just general shitty school programs? Even ones that aren't abstinence-based are usually awful - not talking about lgbt+ issues, spreading misinformation, etc.) and from porn, (I don't want to go into a huge tangent so I won't explain anything more than porn is very unrealistic and often misogynistic in nature.) finding this stuff only reinforces everything they're getting bombarded with already.

Let's be real, unrealistic cat sex isn't going to damage kids horribly. But that doesn't make it okay. It's still a problem that we don't talk about when discussing warriors smut fics. This isn't an exclusive issue either. All smut is capable of (and often does) perpetrating unrealistic sex information. It's just that warriors smut is targeted at kids while most smut is targeted 18+. When I say it's targeted at kids, it isn't often intentional. But again, this fandom is full of kids and most warriors smut writers are kids themselves. I'm bringing this up because warriors smut fics are riddled with inaccuracies. Let's talk about the common ones that apply to humans though I said it all in the last one.

Vaginas don't have to bleed when penetrated for the first time and he doesn't have to be broken! Hymens don't cover the whole vagina. In fact, there are multiple types of hymens and some are normal, some aren't. If a hymen isn't normal, this causes problems with inserting tampons and having penetrative sex. Surgery is needed to correct this. The hymen shouldn't cover the whole vagina. You don't need to break the skin to penetrate it - otherwise, how would

virgins use tampons? It stretches! Though it is possible to tear it. Bleeding can happen and that's fine! But you shouldn't be feeling pain, contrary to all the smut fics that all seem to go "and then her pain turned to pleasure." If sex is hurting, you're not doing right. Feeling uncomfortable? Normal, especially for virgins. But pain? No. You need more lube! Teaching girls that sex is inevitably painful can scare them and cause them to be unable to recognise when something is wrong in sex.

Vaginas aren't supposed to be really tight unless they're clenching during an orgasm or something. Dicks aren't always huge. Rape isn't sexy. No one enjoys it. Misogyny isn't sexy (why are they all like this?) hurting your partner during sex isn't sexy.

Reading smut is fine. Writing smut is fine. Cat smut? Big no. Smut that exists in place easily accessible to kids? Not okay. Perpetrating harmful ideals regarding sex and unrealistic behaviours around something already so misunderstood? Also not okay. People do it without knowing, but it's just so irresponsible. And while it doesn't have a huge effect, it adds to the whole harmful culture around sex.

Short Stories II

Oh, short stories. I'm sure we all have a lot to say on this. So let's spill some tea.

They're very creative! WarriorzLove is a genius and she deserves to be recognised for this! She invented a whole new format of writing that was extremely popular with the fandom. She had clear intent with what she was doing. It was fresh and original when she did them.

This chapter isn't going to be shitting on short stories. Okay, that's kind of a lie. I'm going to be shitting on a **vast majority** of short stories. I'm not a fan of "there's a right and a wrong way to write" (rip the earlier chapters in this book) but generally, there are some things that you should be doing and some things that you shouldn't be doing. So no, not all short stories are bad. I like to think my own one is okay, even if it did meet one of the major cliches. (There is a cannibalistic side plot, but at least it wasn't my protagonist going around eating people for the fun of it.) And I've read some good ones! I won't deny they're not fun to write and I'd encourage people to experiment. But if you want to become a better writer and grow your skills, this isn't the way to go about it.

I don't like to say this but I've got to do it bluntly. Short stories aren't the same as writing a full fic. This doesn't mean they don't take work. I've written one! What it means is that short stories don't require the same skill level as "normal" fanfics.

In normal fics, you do a lot more writing. You need to develop your characters a lot more. You need to work on style, on relationships between characters, on worldbuilding, proper plots and much more. In short stories, most people don't do that. For all of them, you have to put in a lot less effort than a traditional fanfic, coming from someone who's written both. I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings but I have to be honest. Short stories involve very little skill and a lot less effort. It doesn't be as cohesive and fit together as a full-length fic does. Your prose can be mediocre and your characters can

be flat. Your plot can be basic. And people cover up all these bland and boring characters, cliche plots and dull prose with aesthetic no-caps and sentences like "Thistletail jumped into the lake"

It almost seems like a cop-out. You get more reads for shittier writing that you put less effort into. You generate a ton of output for little input. And I know so many people write them for fun. But it can be so frustrating to people like myself who write 1,000+ word chapters who get much fewer reads because we have fewer parts. And I know that isn't what most people aim to do but honestly? It seems less of a creative and stylistic choice the more people do it and more like a way to get a book popular with little effort. If someone writes a mix then I'm more understanding. As I've said multiple times, I wrote one because it seemed fun. So I know why people enjoy them. But if they're all you're writing I'm reluctant to call you a proper writer. I don't like being a gatekeeping bitch but you're not a mathematician for passing some high school tests.

The other problem is, they're all the same. Every time I begin reading a short story to find it starts out like "hi, my name is Xpaw of YClan" I just die a little more. How unoriginal and boring can you get? Imagine starting a published book and reading "hi, my name is Jessica and I live in Ohio." Wouldn't you just roll your eyes and want to put it down? It's so dull and careless.

It's not just the start. Here's an idea, let's play a drinking game (except only a few of us can play because most of you live in the u.s and the legal drinking age is like 18? 21? You're all stuck with soda.) Every time a short story has murder, take a shot. Every time a short story has pedophilia, take a shot. Every time a short story has cannibalism, take a shot. No one wants to read this! You're not a good writer if you're regurgitating the same stories over and over again. If you really want to write short stories, that's up to you. If it makes you happy, do it! But for the love of god, surely it isn't hard to try and think of an original plot. There's so many writing prompts out there. (I have a book on warriors writing prompts, free for use.) There are plenty of resources out there that helps you learn to look for inspiration.

If you want to become a better writer, challenge yourself to write a

longer fic. It doesn't have to be a full-length novel. Try writing around 1000 words a chapter. But don't base your writing on length alone. And then, next thing you write, increase that! When I wrote my first fanfic on here, The Hunted (she's unpublished. It's best she stays that way) I struggled to write 1,000 words per chapter. My current project, Eyesore, has at least 3,000 per chapter and regularly exceeds 5,000 because it's that easy. And through all the fics I've written, most unpublished and abandoned, my writing has improved because traditional fics have enabled me to develop my skills. And this works for me because I want to be able to write novels one day. But that's not everyone's goal and that's okay. If you like writing short stories and want to write them, then try and write good ones, is all I'm saying. Both are valid forms of writing when done right.

Short stories have veered off the road WarriorzLove set out for them. they're not in their prime right now, but they were very popular. They have much less skill and work involved in writing them and that can irk people who put a lot of effort into their stories. This isn't anyone's fault, it's just annoying. The problem y'all have got to fix is these weird cliches that sprung up. Be original. That's a writing skill that y'all seem to get away with not using in your short stories.

_____

Just a note: I hope I seem more constructive in these recent chapters! I'm trying not to lose the essence of the original thing though. Friendly reminder you can always ask for writing tips and while I won't do proper reviews or anything, you can pop in and ask me to read your fic. I won't make any promises but I'll give it a read and give feedback if I have the time!
Also! Hi. I'm writing a fic! I need validation and attention. Feel free to give Eyesore a read. Please. My old fic Saving Sable is still getting more attention and that's horrifying.

Dumb Character Syndrome

There's got to be an official name for this. But I don't know it, nor can I be bothered looking on TV tropes, so the bullshit name I feverishly jotted down in my notes at 4am will have to work.

You know when you're reading a book and the character is trying to work something out and the answer they're looking for is so obvious, so in their face, but they just don't get it? Isn't it the most frustrating thing?

This isn't a Warriors fanfiction specific thing. It appears in all kinds of literature and fanfiction. But it's sure as hell present in Warriors fanfiction. It happens usually when characters are trying to figure out a prophecy. It's at it's worst when people make the most obvious prophecies with the characters name in it and the character is all "oh my god, what does this meeeeeean?" But even when it isn't quite so blatant, it can still be very annoying when the meaning of a prophecy is made obvious but the character still can't get it.

Why do authors do this? Easy answer: to create tension. All books need tension. This is what keeps readers interested and reading. So writers will introduce characters agonizing over something in order to keep the reader waiting for something to happen. But this is a really shitty way to create tension and unfortunately very common. It's extremely lazy and frustrating more than anything. If a book pulls this shit, it doesn't make me want to keep reading. It makes me want to throw the book at a wall. It makes me think "hey. This person sucks at writing."

It doesn't have to be with a prophecy though. It happens in anything and everything. In the Warriors books themselves, so many times characters have just...not used their goddamn brain for the purpose of dragging out the book. How hard is it to use logic? The example that stands strong in my head is when the Three needed to find their biological parents. It's so obvious but they just can't get it! All they needed to do was go "hey. Multiple cats have told us we're these prophecy cats. This means we probably still are.

Hey, who's related to Firestar? Oh, I know, the medicine cat who had an illegal mate. Would she have reason to give away her kits? Yes, because it would be very illegal. What reason would Squirrelflight pretend we're her kits? Yes, because they're sisters." In that situation, it's more bearable because it's easy to see how emotions can get in the way and there are many variables. Sure, it's reasonable and realistic for some doubt and outlandish ideas. It's reasonable and realistic for irrational thinking. But try and make it like your characters actually think. I think the worst thing about the Three and their family situation was that they couldn't work out who their dad was until Yellowfang told Jayfeather. They already knew Leafpool was their mum! It's really not fucking hard to go: "hey, who did Leafpool fall in love with? Oh yeah, Crowfeather." This shit makes me so angry.

The point is, it makes your protagonist looks really stupid if they can't come to simple conclusions. Protagonists generally need to be average intelligence or higher in order to be proactive and carry the plot along, be likable, and keep the reader entertained. Remember how I said it was lazy writing? Let's go back to that. It's a poor way of creating tension. If you can't create any another way, there's a fundamental problem with your plot. And usually, it isn't difficult to find tension in a plot. Just think "what's my character's motivation. What do they want?" And then think "how do I stop them from getting that?" It's literally that simple. Not being able to do that and instead relying on dragging your plot out on a half-assed and boring writing technique is lazy as hell. And if you're serious about writing, you really don't want to be a lazy writer.

If you rely on your characters moaning and whining and everything going in circles because no one stops and thinks (or communicates - lack of communication deserves a chapter on its own, and you bet your ass it's going to get one.) then you are a bad writer. Or maybe a good writer using a fucking terrible technique that makes you look like a bad writer.

This trope really, really, *really* pisses me off. I've seen it in fanfics so many times I've run out of patience. I just can't be bothered reading through them anymore. I don't have the time to read something that makes me feel like I'm wading in mud.

I see it so many times with prophecies in this fandom. The author writes a very basic, obvious prophecy and then because their plot has no other substance to keep it going, fall back on this terrible technique to keep it "interesting." No, I don't want to hear about how Ravenleaf, who's very suspicious about the secretly evil warrior Flamefang, can't work out what the prophecy "The bird will defeat the fire that threatens to burn the forest to nothing but ash and embers" means. I don't want to read another "my brother keeps waking up with mysterious wounds and he's defensive all the time, could he maybe be up to no good?" And if I have to read another "why does Rowanpaw always act so weird around me? He always tags along after me and blushes every time I speak. What does this mean" I will rip out my eyes.

Y'all. I'm tired. I'm doing NCEA level 2 in school this year. It's the most important year over here in nz. I just want some good fics. Is that too much to want?

Types of fanfics

This is more of an analysis than a rant. It certainly isn't a "this problem is the worst thing ever, feel my wrath!" kind of chapter.

One thing that really separates the warriors fanfiction community from other fanfic communities is that we don't have a lot of 'canon' stories, at least not many on Wattpad. What I mean by that is we don't write many fanfictions set in the canon world with canon characters. And that strikes me as odd because with Warriors, there's so many opportunities for au's.

Let's compare to the Harry Potter fandom. I'm not active in this community on here but I read the fanfictions when I have time. Alternatively, the HP fandom solely uses canon characters, or ocs inserted into the canon world. They don't have any fics like ours, where the characters are all ocs and none are canon, with FanClans and the like. And honestly, it really bothers me.

The thing is, Warriors is a huge series, with multiple generations of characters, with a vast number of plotlines. There are so many opportunities for au's! How about a fanfiction where Firestar is accepted into ShadowClan instead of ThunderClan? Or if Jake brought Firestar into WindClan to Tallstar so that Firestar could live the life he couldn't? Firestar would grow up with Onestar as a friend instead of Graystripe. If he was in ShadowClan, what role would he play in Brokenstar's tyranny? What about if Hollyleaf had never died and was actually part of the Three? Or if Cinderpelt never had her accident? What about if Mudclaw became leader of WindClan? If Scourge joined ThunderClan when Thistleclaw encountered him. How about if Snowkit survived, or Tigerstar's siblings? What about a fic where Feathertail survived and chose to live in the Tribe of Rushing Water? You could even be scandalous and have a *whispers* oc and canon character couple. I don't get why they're considered so horrible. They're not inherently badly written, and let's stop enabling cringe culture by tiptoeing around everything remotely "cringy." You could write an oc with

Alderheart, Jayfeather, Tawnypelt, Ivypool, Leafstar, Hawkfrost, Darktail, Ravenpaw, any character! Or you could just include your oc into the story. Obviously ocs in canon stories come with their own issues but generally, these stories can be amazing. Just take a look at those HP fics! There's so many oc/canon pairings and so many of them work really well.

I can understand why people are scared to write these fics. Writing canon characters can be daunting! I have a chapter here about writing canon characters out of character and how I was too scared to write a fic with canon characters. Well guess what? I challenged myself and I'm currently writing Eyesore, my Power of Three au fic! I write the characters the way I interpret them, allowing them to grow in a way canon didn't support, but still keeping their core traits intact and their character as accurate as I can.

Alternatively, I'd love to see Harry Potter fanfics with no canon characters at all. Full of ocs, set in the same world, the way we do. In my opinion, the worldbuilding was one of the best parts of the Harry Potter books. So I'd love to see more of the world explored. (I'd like to write a fic like this myself sometime.) The world of werewolves, what it's like at a different wizarding school like Durmstrang or something completely made up, even just set at Hogwarts. There's so many opportunities that aren't being taken! It makes me so mad! And hey, maybe these do exist and I'm just not looking hard enough. Maybe they exist on a different site, I don't know.

I just find it interesting how two fandoms on the same site write such different fanfics and so frustrating how there isn't more of a mix because both sides have some amazing creative opportunities that I'd love to see taken advantage of. Both sides would really benefit!

It would be interesting to see a new range of fics in this fandom, though I don't know what else we could introduce. Maybe humanised warriors fanfics? I don't know if it's just me but I'm a sucker for those. It would just be cool to see us extend on our fanfiction and exercise our creativity. Like short stories! I know I just complained about them but they're something entirely unique to this fandom, this community, and that's fucking cool.

I'd love to see some more Warriors aus written here. I've seen some good ones though! Tumblr also has a lot of au fics up on there.

Anyway I'm not sure what this chapter is and it's not at all edited but I'm publishing anyway because I'm a Lazy Bitch. It's a bit all over the place but hey. Sometimes it's good to have less "professional" or "composed" chapters!

Mental Illness ll part 1

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When planning out a chapter revising my earlier one on mental illness, I realised there are so many issues that come under mental illness in wc fanfiction. So it's split into multiple parts.

This one is about unrealistic understanding of mental illness in warriors fanfiction. What that means is basically how the Clans in people's fanfictions and their understanding of mental illness is often really unrealistic.

Sure, the Warriors society is anthropomorphic. But there is a line between anthropomorphic and unrealistic. And sometimes people take their anthropomorphism way too far, into the point where they should probably just write about humans.

There is no reason, no logical reason that Clans would know what bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety, etc, is in human terms. No reason why they would follow the exact same treatment plans. They're cats. They have no knowledge of brain function.
That doesn't mean you shouldn't write about mental illness. Trust me, I encourage it. But please remember that they're cats. They have a complete different society and understanding of things.

I can already see the comments regarding Saving Sable coming. And let me explain: yeah. I fucked up. When writing that fic, I justified that the Clans knew reactive attachment disorder by name, as well as specific therapies and treatment plans, because a cat with more advanced knowledge came and told the Clan. And yeah, I guess that works. But it's lazy and a bit too miraculous. The magical stranger with an answer for everything is just shitty writing. I wrote SS when I was 14 and my opinions and how I write has changed since then.

I planned to write about the society where aforementioned magical stranger came from. And then I abandoned all worldbuilding and planning for two years. Yikes. But I'm actively worldbuilding and planning for that again, and needless to say there'll be some

revisions to that society that make them more realistic to cats.

It's just a bit disconcerting, to be honest. Reading a Warriors fic and suddenly they're talking about complex human terms. Imagine reading that in a published book. It would feel out of place and make the established society feel less real. Especially when it's inconsistent. Oh yeah, the Clans know what social anxiety disorder is and how to treat it, but they don't know what a fucking car is. You'd think some kittypet would've told them by now.

This is such an easy problem to fix. Even in the canon series, they've made shots at mental illness. Unfortunately it hasn't always been that great (no, Erins, Bluestar did not have dementia. She had ptsd. I've ranted about this before, and I'll do it again.) But I think Palebird's story tells it quite well. No one ever said "hey, Palebird, I think you have postnatal depression." But everyone was gentle around her and understood that she was sad, a different sad to the usual emotion. They understood that she felt drained and exhausted a lot. They understood that she could be detatched. And they treated her accordingly. No diagnosises made, no words said. It was just "this is how Palebird is feeling. This is how we act around her and help her." Readers have the ability to read between the lines.

I think this is the most realistic of the scenarios, if you don't want to write about ableism. But that can be a little limiting. So let's warriorise mental illness.

I'd suggest making it similar to greencough. Symptoms remain the same, but no one goes around using scientific words like "conduct disorder" or "psychopathy." They use more warrior-like names. As for treatment, they're not going to spout out shit about "selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor." Cats don't know shit about serotonin. But they do have herbs and those herbs also have mental health healing properties. Obviously not realistically, but herbs like thyme are said to soothe shock. And no, cats aren't going to understand "cognitive behavioural therapy," but that doesn't mean you can't adapt some of the key ideas to fit into the warriors world. I saw a really good tumblr post about this about two years ago. I hunted it down here:

Anyway, just some ideas. It just gets on my nerves. If you want to

write warriors fanfiction, write warriors fanfiction. If it doesn't fit the world, write about humans. Not a hard concept, y'all.

You're Writing Shy Characters Wrong

I've noticed a lot of protagonists in Warriors fanfictions are shy. This isn't a bad thing! A lot of us are shy people (the "introverted teen writer/reader" stereotype exists for a reason!) and we tend to portray this through our characters. Everyone likes to read about characters they can relate to, which is why shy characters are so popular here.

But unfortunately, being shy is limiting. As someone with social anxiety disorder (a different thing from shyness, but similar enough to be compared) I miss a lot of opportunities because of my mental illness. I can't be independent because I'm terrified of social interaction. I struggle to make friends and speak up in any situation. Putting that in a book context, that creates a lot of limitations for the protagonist. They won't form relationships as easily, they won't be as proactive as an outgoing character would be. They're not as likely to be a leader or stand up for a cause. All things that are *great* in protagonists.

Does this mean a shy characters can't achieve any of these things? Absolutely not. Does this mean you shouldn't write shy characters? No! But these things will affect how the protagonist thinks, feels, and behaves.

And this is where so many writers go wrong. They describe the character as shy, but then the character is capable of standing up to a cat in power without struggle. The character is reserved and struggles in conversation with others, but miraculously is able to lead rebellions, lie to those with the ability to hurt them, and perform big social accomplishments down to determination?

It's shitty characterisation. You can't just tell the reader what a character is like, you need to show it too. Having your shy character act like a confident one is out of character; it goes against their established nature. Sure, you've told the reader that the

character is shy, but you've contradicted that with their actions. That's like saying "hey, here's Oakstripe. Oakstripe is really nice." *Cuts to Oakstripe bullying apprentices.*

The thing is, it's not that hard. There are skills in writing that are generally considered difficult, like establishing character voice, but not blatantly contradicting a huge part of your character's personality. Little things that are out of character? That's easy to do. This? No. It's not hard. So why do so many people make this mistake? Am I being harsh or are so many people here not thinking about what they write?

It's just so annoying to read. Ask any shy person, can you just turn off your shyness when it's convenient for you? No. You can't. That's what really pisses me off about this trope. Having social anxiety, every little interaction is a struggle. And seeing a character having a similar fear of social situations just suddenly overcome that whenever it suits them really grinds my gears on a personal level. So not only is it bad writing, it really pisses readers off!

Remember how I said before about how your shy character can still be a leader, still stand up to others, and be proactive, but their shyness should still affect them? I don't know if I would call being shy a flaw, but I would call it restrictive. That's not to say shy people can't overcome their shyness and do the things that scares them. In fact, that's what can help shy people. Your characters should be doing this. This is where they can stand up to others. But it isn't an easy thing. It's a conscious effort, and it's hard. Your writing should reflect it. Don't just erase that shyness. Show that conflict. It makes your characters seem stronger, and gives you a great opportunity to develop your character and show them becoming less shy and more outgoing, if that's where you want to go with your character. Really, that's all you need to do. Figure out their limits. What can they overcome without too much struggle, what can they overcome with anxiety, and what is too scary for them to achieve? This is something that can (and should) change throughout the book, if you want character development points. Then you write them going through these challenges and show how some are harder than others.

So here's Puddlestalk. Puddlestalk witnesses a group of apprentices

bullying another. He doesn't have too much trouble telling them off. But when other warriors start teasing him a little too seriously, he finds it pretty scary to tell them to stop, but he can accomplish it. But when higher ranking cats in positions of authority reprimand him or treat him unkindly, he can't speak up.
Fast forward to the end of his character arc, where Puddlestalk has had to expose a big conspiracy going on in the Clan. Now it's easier for him to speak up for himself and he is able to speak up against characters of authority, though it still gives him anxiety.

So yeah, when adding character development and character arcs into the mix it can get more complicated. This is something you should add in eventually, but your first worry should be about portraying shy characters accurately and not just erasing their shyness, a part of their personality, whenever it suits the narrative.

Homophobia in Fics

This isn't edited yet because I'm lazy so no one's allowed to point out my spelling/grammar mistakes. If u do u get cursed

Over the years I've spent on Wattpad (Something like four? Oh shit. Didn't know it had been that long. I don't have much to show for it,) i've seen the fandom grow up and trends shift onto more mature themes in fanfiction. One that's been popping up is homophobia.

There isn't anything wrong with homophobia in fics. It's cool to see real life issues be adapted to the Warriors world. A lot of us are gay and like to represent the oppression we face. Nothing wrong with that.

But the way homophobia is written about in a lot of fanfics isn't great. Makes me think some of y'all don't understand homophobia.

Homophobia isn't something that just happens to exist. It's a construct. It wouldn't exist without the human ability of complex thought. What I'm trying to say is it's a complex social issue with a lot of reasoning behind it. And fics often miss the mark.

You can't just parrot off the words "it's unnatural!" "it's wrong!" because you've heard homophobes say it. This is what I see the most commonly in fics. But *why* do the Clans find it unnatural and wrong? If you don't provide the reason why, your fic reads as juvenile and shallow. A good fic has depth.

See, in our world, homophobia largely stems from religion. The Bible said fuck them gays and that was that. Terrible attempts at making this a fun read aside, homophobia in the western world (and other countries too) comes from the belief that a religious figure condemns it. In the Old Testament, it's said that "man shall not lie with man," which is interpreted as against homosexuality. I've heard that it's a mistranslation that was supposed to mean pedophilia is a sin, but I don't know if that's true. It also comes from God making "Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve."

This chapter isn't to debate homosexuality, but it's pretty clear I'm all for lgbt+ and am against homophobia. I'm a bi girl! I like girls! Hell yeah gays! I'm not religious so I don't care what the Christian God condemns, (that doesn't mean that God's word is worthless; we respect Christians in this house) and even if I did, I would keep in mind that times have changed.

Warriors doesn't have the same religious condemnation as our society has. And sure, you can add it into your worldbuilding if you want. It isn't the route I'd personally take (in my opinion, if you're writing a fic that is just the human world but with cats, stick to the human world,) but there's nothing wrong with this approach! Go for it.

Let's take a step back to the "unnatural and wrong" argument. We've crossed off the religious reasoning. Throw it out the window for the time being. (Can human society do that? Just yeet homophobes in the opposite direction and run away?) But unnatural actually works in warriors fics...but none of you dumbasses ever write it well! It frustrates me so much. It's like the answer is right there, in neon yellow light, and y'all just look right past it.

Cats are cats. And to cats, reproduction is really important. For us humans, not so much with our current population. But in each Clan, they need reproduction to keep the Clan alive. Lgbt+ cats threaten the survival of the Clans because they're unable to have kits. Obviously there are some major solutions to this issue, like cats could just have kits and give em to another couple, or only some cats would be in same-sex relationships...its still a reason. It doesn't have to be logical, homophobia rarely is, but it makes sense.

And hey, if you want to incorporate real-life issues into warriors fics, say a big fuck you to prolifers and write a fic paralleling the current abortion situation where the Clans are extremely strict on reproductive rights, forcing mollies to mate and raise kits, and if you want to be realistic, include absorption. Cats can absorb their kits back into the womb...so basically an abortion? Just a warning, if you include reabsorption, you're going to get so many comments on it. Trust me, I offhandedly mentioned it in Saving Sable and it caused quite a stir.
This is a tangent but you know...here's a plot up for grabs?

When people write about serious social issues in warriors fics but miss the complex issues behind them, it doesn't look good. It looks really fucking ignorant, and it just gets on my nerves, I guess. I'm not saying you have to make your book a big moral debate. Most of us are teens. We're not geniuses; save that for philosophy students. Just make sure it fits into your world with valid reason for why it happens. That's all I ask.

You aesthetic fuckers

Hey. I get that making your books aesthetic is pretty. There's nothing wrong with liking that. I do!

But some of you need to get it into your heads that this is primarily a book writing site. Not an aesthetic site. Having a pretty aesthetic doesn't make you a better writer. You spend more time on your aesthetic than your writing? This is the wrong site for you. Go to Pinterest or something.

It's so fucking annoying to see people getting heaps of followers and praise for their aesthetic, while I know plenty of amazing writers who don't get the same recognition. Because let's be real, this is a form of social media. Follows and recognition is important, no matter how much we say it doesn't to sound mature.

I understand you think all lowercase letters look pretty. But it looks *so shitty* in writing. Save that for your smb. Your characters names need to be capitalised. Places should be capitalised. The start of a sentence should be capitalised. I know you think your fonts look pretty, but they make your writing hard to read. They're off-putting. And for some of us poor bitches with androids, just an unreadable bunch of boxes. Save it for your bios. I clicked on your book to read it, not say "Wow, this is so pretty!"

Let me reiterate, there's nothing wrong with being aesthetic. There's nothing wrong with appreciating it. But this is a writing site. People are losing the point of this community. Wattpad isn't a one use site, but come on. If you're not gonna balance your aesthetic out with writing, then what's the point?

It frustrates me to no end seeing people be so praised over their aesthetic when they barely even write. Because no matter how pretty your graphics book is, it isn't real writing. Some people here are building their egos on how pretty their books and profiles are, some others are just feeding this. It's tiring. I just want some good fucking writing.

Have your aesthetic bios, have your aesthetic smbs, have your aesthetic graphics books. (hey. I know it takes effort to make pretty covers and be aesthetic. Please don't mistake this chapter with me saying y'all are lazy.)
I'm not one of those people who think fanfiction and original works should be the only books on wattpad. Go ham with art books, graphics, roleplay, games. But please, please, *please*, remember this is primarily a writing site. I come here to read, not see a bunch of boxes because you want to have a fancy font at the expense of your writing.

This isn't anti-aesthetic. I like aesthetics. I like pretty books. It's cool to see the effort some of you put into them. Buuuut it pisses me off when people turn this into an aesthetic site rather than a writing site. Just try to balance them, you know?

Fucking Moonmoon

It's time to address the moon problem. If you've ever read a warriors rant book, or been in the fandom 2016-2017, you'll be very familiar with the fandom's beef with the prefix (or suffix) "moon." This particular prefix is regarded as forbidden, woe betide any unknowing 11 year old who dares use it.

This fandom *hates* when someone uses moon in a name. Because Vicky said it was forbidden one time, despite the clear canon contradictions (Moonflower, Ambermoon, etc.) Because its overused in mary sue ocs created by young children, which is a terribly cringy crime. If you dare use this name, expect backlash, "well-meaning individuals" who "just want to help you" by pointing out how you must never use that name. It goes against the rules. You know, as if warriors ever had concrete rules, or as if fandoms and fanfiction had to follow canon completely.

I've written about this before. If you look back on "Unrealistic Names," written in the great year for our fandom, 2017, I mentioned how it was a sacred name because its what the Clans spiritual sites are named after. And that's true. Good point, me. But whoever said that things associated with spirituality had to be forbidden to use for anyone else? There are millions of Christian children named after biblical figures, and that isn't disrespectful at all. People have been named after religious figures for a long time, and it's considered respectful! Not to mention, it's not like moon is only used as a name for the Moonpool or the Moonstone. It's also the name of the fucking moon. The moon. In the sky. Used to chart months. So what's the problem with ocs called Moonshine or Mooneyes? They're named after the glowing ball in the sky, like the sun. Just like cloud, or sky.

Yes, I know, its a name typically used by kids making beautiful and special mary sues. Come on guys, we're better than that. Cringe culture fucking sucks!! I had an oc named Moonshine when I was 12. And yeah, she was a massive mary sue. But she made me happy

and I liked roleplaying as her. I was having fun! I didn't need to impress anyone or have amazing character design skills. Moon is a beautiful prefix and a beautiful suffix. No wonder younger kids gravitate to it. Its true moon has some mary sue connotations, and people might make assumptions about your character if its their prefix. But people are going to make assumptions about everything you write when they first read it. From the title to the protagonist's name, people make assumptions about everything. So let them. Sure, when people see your protagonist named Moonflight and go "oh shit, a mary sue." Their assumptions don't matter. You want to name your oc moon, fucking do it.

As a fandom, we have bigger things to worry about then people using the prefix moon. Like Draikinator. Stop policing what people name their ocs, it's completely harmless.

Leader's Revelation

Hey, look, there's no swearing in this title!

I read a lot of fics where the leader makes a big, life-changing announcement out of nowhere, such as renouncing the Clan's faith in StarClan, or a big change in the Clan's culture. This revelation is unexpected. There has been no discussion, there's been no signs of anything changing. This announcement isn't a positive one, it's usually something that the Clan disagrees with. This change sets up the story.

So what? I've just described a plot. What's wrong with this?

The problem is that it's incredibly unrealistic. That's not to say everything in a book should be realistic, but some things should be. Some things, when they're unrealistic, take away from the story and annoy the reader. And this is one of them. Imagine, if one of our world leaders, stood up and said that certain religions could no longer be followed. Or that we were suddenly enemies with a country we've had no problem with before, or suddenly all conflict has been resolved with a country we've been enemies with for a long time, **with little proof or explanation to support this announcement.** Now, I'm not saying that this has never or would never happen. History is fucking weird, I can guarantee something like this has happened some time. The problem is that a group of people would never agree to this. There's be riots on the streets. Calls of impeachment or resignation. People would blatantly disobey. It would only ever work in a completely tyrannical society.

Anyone who's been reading my fic "See You Alive," is probably thinking "hang on. Isn't this exactly what you did?" You're right, Spiderstar announces the end to a long conflict between RimuClan and BeechClan, and that the two Clans are uniting to become one big Clan with no prior discussion or indication that this would happen. But that's sort of the point. Without saying spoilers, neither RimuClan or BeechClan take too kindly to the news. And he does, at least, try to get his Clan on his side, instead of just saying what

they're doing and expecting his Clan to obey whether they like it or not. The whole point is that it can't work. I promise I'm not a giant hypocrite...well, not this instance anyway.

This whole thing annoys me because it just would never happen. Power to the people!! A Clan wouldn't let some big, unpopular, life-changing announcement slide. There'd be resistance and protest *at least.* It's true the Clan's are more of a dictatorship than anything, and there is that fucking "the leader's word is law" bullshit that's a recipe for disaster. But even in the books themselves, the cats don't follow every idiot thing a leader commands. Fireheart went behind Bluestar's back to prevent a needless battle.

(Spoilers for The Silent Thaw)....

Spotfur starts a fucking rebellion against Bramblestar over this codebreaker business! People don't just listen and obey unless there's adequate punishment for disobeying, which turns the fic into a whole new kind of fic. Every time I read some leader make an announcement that changes the Clan's lives without warning when that change is an unpopular one, and then the Clan all goes "well, this sucks" and then does nothing except complain, I facepalm. I read it and think "damn, the author knows nothing about politics and how the world works. Like, even less than me!" It makes the Clan feel unreal, and having the social group feel real is such an important part of writing.

So seriously, if your fic includes your leader making some huge, out of the blue announcement, really consider the consequences of that change. Is it gonna come back and bite them in the ass? Because it really should. If there isn't going to be backlash, the Clan should agree with this change. And if they don't agree, and there is no social consequence? Cut that announcement out, because it's adding nothing to your story. The things you write about need to have meaning and add to your story. It doesn't always have to be big plot events, but it needs to have some sort of purpose, like developing a character. So a major announcement with no impact really shouldn't be in there.

Please stop doing this in your fics. I see so many amazing fanfics meet their downfall here. This mistake won't ruin your fic - but I

know you can do so much better.

Rape Isn't Sexy

Rape and sexual assault tw//

I was really struggling to think of a topic to write about for this book. Between school, mental health, and everything else going on in my life, I'm not able to read many fanfictions, so the ones I read are ones I genuinely enjoy. For the first time in my life I couldn't think of something to complain about. Am I finally becoming a positive person? Has the true meaning of life been live, laugh, love all along?

Turns out I've just been reading some quality fanfiction. Because yesterday I found something to complain about, and I couldn't believe I haven't done it already. I was looking through the "warriorcats" tag and saw that within the top 10, there were smut books. And then it hit me. The biggest fucking problem with these smut books and I've only mentioned it in passing. I've written two rants about warriors lemons already, and I brushed over this?

It's gross that people like writing cat sex. It's gross (and a little funny) that their writing is riddled with so many inaccuracies and that young kids are exposed to it. But it's a whole different level that these people write about characters getting raped as if that's something that's sexy.

I forced myself to read a couple of these so I could get a general idea of what these chapters actually looked like. As a side note, it's kind of funny how they're all obviously written by kids who have had no sexual experience whatsoever. I'm not shaming people for having no sexual experience, I've just gotta laugh and how badly these are written.
I noticed two themes with awful rape chapters. The character either starts off resisting and ends up enjoying it, or they end up a sobbing mess. At least the latter is accurate.

It's so incredibly disgusting. I honestly cannot believe I have to say this but getting off to rape is disgusting. You're a disgusting person.

I don't care if it's fictional, it's so incredibly wrong. It's sickening. Absolutely sickening. I doubt anyone writing these lemons are rape survivors. I doubt anyone reading them are either. How in any way does the image of someone being violated get you off? How is the idea of someone in pain sexy to you? I get that degradation is a kink but this is something else. This is...very concerning. Talk to a fucking therapist. It's horrific that you guys think it's okay to sexualise trauma.

I can imagine one of these kids claiming that they don't believe rape is okay and their writing doesn't reflect their ideals. And yeah, I'd believe that. They probably aren't meaning to romanticise rape. But they are. There aren't any topics that are necessarily off limits in writing. You can write about rape. I read a Warriors fic that unfortunately was discontinued that wrote about rape. It was *fantastic*. It was clear to the reader what was happening without it being porn. It was handled maturely and appropriately, and most of all, it wasn't romanticised or sexualised. It was clear within the text that rape is wrong. The character was hurting and traumatised. That's what's missing with these lemons. The intent is all wrong. They don't write rape to highlight that it's wrong, they write it to get people off. That's sexualising and fucking sick. I don't care if you believe rape is wrong, if you're writing this kind of bullshit, you're actively adding to rape culture by making rape seem acceptable.

No, I don't think that many people go away from these fics genuinely believing rape is okay. But you can't deny the implications of writing things like this. Like it or not, you are presenting rape in a positive light. You are sending the message that rape is sexy, that it's acceptable. Every comment, opinion, piece of media that promotes rape in any way enables rapists. I don't care that these are cat fanfictions that aren't going to be seen by many people, I don't care if you think you're harmless and you're not hurting anyone. You are. You're contributing to rape culture, and having an impact on the wider world, even if that wider world is the five reads you're managing to scrape each chapter. Those five readers are now getting off to sexual assault. Associating rape with their own sexual gratification. I doubt these fics are turning people into rapists. But they're still internalising unhealthy beliefs about rape. Sure, you can claim your sexy rape fics aren't hurting anyone,

you can whine "if you don't like it don't read it!!!" until the cows come home. But we all know that's bullshit. That's plain immaturity and an inability to understand the world around you and take accountability for your actions. If you're too young or too ignorant to understand that writing rape stories for other's pleasure is wrong, you're far too young or ignorant to be writing them. Delete your book and start reading about rape culture.

The majority of the people who write or read this stuff are young teens who don't realise the depth of their actions. They probably don't know much about sex, and are so horny they'll get off to the just the words "penis" and "vagina," not even caring about the context. Or should I say "member" and "core."

But in all seriousness, it's horrible. Especially the stories where the character starts to enjoy the rape. I'm not shaming survivors who have experienced physical pleasure and reaction to sex, you can't control your body's reaction, and that's a normal response. But no one enjoys rape. Not mentally. As if there's any point in writing about cats getting raped, there's even less point in writing one where both parties end up enjoying it, because then you're writing about normal sex and didn't "need" to include graphic trauma in the first place. Though you never need to write graphic trauma porn. If you feel like you do...talk to a therapist. Get some help.

I can't lay all the blame on these fic writers. Most of them are kids, after all. Trauma porn is a disturbing trend in media. We're fed unnecessary graphic scenes for the sake of shock value. Take 13 reasons why, which showed a character's suicide and rape, exploiting suicide and rape for money and views while under the guise of raising awareness. Those scenes didn't have to be in there. But they were. At the very worst, it's used for voyeuristic creeps to get off to other people's pain and hurt. Literally trauma porn. So I'm really not all that surprised that young kids absorb this and think its okay. But it's not okay, and it's a real problem in this fandom.

Lets stop brushing off smut fics as "ew, gross, cat sex!" That's a genuine problem too, but this is something that has been ignored for far too long. I don't understand it. If you're that horny for warrior cats, humanise them. Stop writing graphic rape for pleasure. Getting off to pain isn't normal. I don't want a repeat of

"the Purification Army," but lets quietly report and try to get these fics taken down. They have no place in our fandom.

AsexualiTEA

I find the title just as cringy as you do but I just couldn't help myself.

I have a problem with the way the Warriors fandom portrays its asexual characters. This isn't exclusive to Warriors, its a societal issue, but I don't have a society rant book, I have a wc fanfiction rant book.

A big thing people don't seem to understand is asexual=/=aromantic. The only asexual characters I see are characters who don't take a mate. This exists in books too, like Mousefur or Charlie Weasley. But a lot of people who are asexual feel romantic attraction, and date people. It's perfectly possible to have a relationship without sex. I used to identify as asexual, and this always used to make me feel invalid. People make ace characters who don't have mates because it's the easiest way to show they're asexual, and generally because sex is seen as normal in relationships and a lot of people just make that assumption that ace people don't date, because if they don't feel sexual attraction, they can't *possibly* feel romantic attaction and be in relationships. To ace people, that can be hurtful. Not only is it an inaccurate portrayal, it comes off as "I don't believe anyone would want to date you, because sex is so important you can't have a relationship without it." And that makes ace people feel abnormal.

So when deciding to make an asexual character, don't just go, "oh hey, I haven't given Frostheart a mate. He can be asexual!" Instead, think: "Hey, I want to make an asexual character. How about Flickerbreeze? She has a mate and adopted kits. Maybe the reason she chose to take in those adopted kits was because she wanted kits, and adopting them made her more comfortable than forcing herself to mate to have kits."

The next problem I find is the personalities people give to their ace characters. We're all well aware of the gay stereotype, a flamboyant and feminine man who is so confident and loves fashion. But we

often overlook the asexual stereotype. And, you know, I get that the two stereotypes aren't comparable - a man can be beaten up, killed, abused, because he acts stereotypically gay. That doesn't happen to asexuals. But the stereotype is still hurtful! Not everyone who's asexual is shy, quiet, cold and aloof. I hate this stereotype. I absolutely fucking hate it. It all goes back to the idea that anyone who doesn't like sex is a frigid, disinterested person who doesn't care about others, which just screams "you're weird and abnormal because you don't like sex!" Nothing like that to make a person feel like absolute and utter shit about their identity. Why can't extroverted people be asexual? Why can't wild, fun, and outgoing people with lots of friends be asexual? Experiencing sexual attraction or not experiencing it isn't a personality trait.

So why not make your funny, social butterfly character asexual? It won't effect the story in any way. Maybe that character just won't have kits in the future. Maybe they'll fuck once to get pregnant and have kits, but still not experience attraction, who knows? But please try to stay away from the "I'm the quiet and shy awkward girl uwu" stereotype, and *please, for the love of god* stay away from the "I'm An EmO tWiStEd CyClE pAtH aNd I DoN't CaRe AbOuT aNyOnE eLsE" stereotype. That last one is really fucking dehumanising. Asexual people aren't robots. They aren't unlovable monsters. Surely you can see why making all your villains asexual is shit representation? Not only is it negative representation, but it's also poor writing. Don't claim they're asexual because you can't envision them being in a relationship; flesh your villain out enough to give them relationships.

Stop writing your asexual characters as unattractive. I see this happen a lot in other fandoms, like with Peter Pettigrew in the HP fandom. This is rooted in fatphobia and the idea that for someone not to have sex, they must be undesirable. No way. Someone can be hot as hell and be asexual. Asexual people can be goddamn beautiful, interesting and funny, and still not want to fuck. Their identity has nothing to do with their personality or their appearance.

Asexual people don't act like cold, standoffish robots. Not wanting sex doesn't make someone innocent or immature. Stop infantilizing

asexual characters, it's fucking weird.

I wish asexual (and aromantic) characters were treated better within the fandom. When I look back on one of the first chapters in this book, lgbt+ representation, it's wonderful to see how far we've come in this fandom. It's less common to have a book full of straight characters than one with lgbt+ characters, and that's great! But as I said in the revised version of that chapter, we still have a way to go. We need to do more than just represent a range of sexualities, we have to put in the effort to represent them well. It's not too difficult - just do a little research. Search up "how to write asexual characters."

I know representation is a big topic for authors and brings up a lot of differing opinions. I know it can be scary. But these are conversations we need to be having, now more than ever. Writing, when taken seriously, can be difficult, and that means putting effort into your characters and their identities. I promise no one will crucify you if you make a mistake. Everyone does it! The media likes to twist cancel culture into some huge problem, but I guarantee the Warriors community won't go on a witch hunt for you accidentially misrepresent an identity. Please just listen to critiques, research, learn, and rectify your mistakes. I don't want anyone to walk away being scared to write asexual characters, but I need you all to think critically about your writing and your characters. Plenty of people just write for fun and not seriously, and that's fine! You might not want to research every detail. But please be aware that the identities you include in your fics are real identities. Belonging to real people who are affected by the way they're represented in media. You don't have to write all the nuances of an identity, but please put in the effort to actively do no harm. Stay away from stereotypes. It's not that hard, guys!

Let's Talk About Suicide

[image] [image]

If you clicked on this, you already know what it's about. But a big ol trigger warning anyway - don't read this if you're in a vunerable state and you feel that this may trigger you to want to harm yourself in any way.

So. Suicide. It's a big topic, huh. The scary stuff. People have been exploring it in fanfiction for years. And getting it so, so wrong.

But who am I to tell you what's wrong and what's right about portraying suicide? Do I really think I'm that important? Uh, well, I'm a suicide attempt survivor. I have been involved in the mental health recovery community and have friends who have attempted as well. Oh look, I even have my official certification!

Sorry for the dark humor, I'm trying to make some of this lighthearted because parts of this will be heavy, and show you that I'm not some random, inexperienced person telling you how suicidal characters should be written. But please remember that my experience is not the only experience or the inherently right one. Everyone experiences suicidality and mental illness in different ways, and none of those ways are "wrong."

The first mistake I see, the less serious one, comes from a lack of critical thinking and understanding of the reasons behind suicide. I see a lot of suicidal warriors characters whose suicidal thoughts boil down to "I want to die." The suicidal character will be hurting, and their inner monologue will be all about "I want to die because that will fix everything." And that makes no sense to me. These cats have a StarClan. They have a definite, tangible, inarguable afterlife. Medicine cats visit it, communicate with it. There's no uncertainty. What makes death seem like a good option when you're suicidal is that it's a way to end things. To get out of your situation. To stop hurting. Because it's the end. There's no afterlife, no definite one at least. When you're gone, you're gone. It's oblivion. But in a Clan setting, the existence of StarClan changes that. Dying doesn't end

your character's situation and it doesn't offer any finality. Your character is just in StarClan feeling the same way they did before. Any reason causing their suicidal ideation still exists. There's no escape.

When characters are just going around parroting "I want to die" as their sole reason for wanting to kill themselves, it shows a lack of understanding of suicidal ideation. It's so much more than just wanting to die. Suicide is a deeply complex issue; its affected by systemic and societal issues, brought on by mental illness and life circumstance. Thoughts of "I want to die" are the way these issues are expressed. I'll take full accountability; I wrote a character just like this. Aubade in Sirens. She attempted suicide because she was sad about the state of the world or something? I can't even remember. And at the time, I thought that was an accurate portrayal because I was young and didn't understand suicide. All my knowledge of suicide was came down to "I want to die to escape this situation." Because that's what my suicidal thoughts were like at the time. We'll come back to this point.

So please, when you're writing a suicidal character, their reasoning should be deeper than wanting to drink escape a situation. Deeper than "I hate myself so I'm going to die to run away from myself." I see that one a lot. It doesn't work because they're literally just gonna wake up in StarClan, still with the same feelings and situation they had before. You need to understand the mental illness and background factors driving their suicidal thoughts. How does the world around them impact their mental health? Men are more likely to commit suicide, likely due to the culture we foster in the western world where men should not share their emotions, should not go to therapy. So they repress their shit until they burst. Misogyny, poverty, transphobia, homophobia, ableism. These societal factors have a huge impact on suicide. And while not all of this will be applicable to Warriors, it's important to understand these things, otherwise your portrayal comes off as shallow. Mental illness is impacted hugely by systemic and societal issues, and you should always take into account the culture and environment within your protagonist's Clan. You don't have to go too deep into this if you don't want to, but please don't go down the "I hate myself so I want to die route" because in a Clan setting it just doesn't work.

The bigger issue I see is over-dramatisation of suicidal ideation. I see these characters having constant breakdowns, screaming and crying, always on the edge of hurting themselves. You know, the ones who sound like all those edgy emo posts on instagram. These characters are a walking caricature of suicide; they're an emo twelve year old who's just found out the word depression for the first time and has made it their identity. That's not what mental illness is like in most cases. It's not what being suicidal is like either. Sometimes people do going around screaming "I want to die." Sometimes their thoughts are constant suicidal mantras. But guess what? That's a mental health episode. It's not a constant. It's not the day to day life of someone with depression. Depression is usually quiet. You drag yourself through the day. You're not "birth is a curse and existence is a prison" all the time. Sometimes you are. But most of the time it's casual. It's a feeling of greyness, or numbness. A lot of the time suicidal thoughts aren't "oh my goood I'm in so much pain all I want to do is fling myself off a cliff." The majority of the time it's subtle. You drop a pencil and your brain goes "well that sucks. Go kill yourself."

I can already hear the comments of "akshually, I'm depressed and it really does feel like I'm in unbearable pain all the time and my brain is constantly screaming at me to die." As I said before, everyone experiences mental illness and suicidal thoughts differently. And I'm not here to invalidate you or tell you your experience is wrong. Because everyone's reality of mental illness is valid and real. But what I will say is when I was younger, that's what my mental illness felt like. And I wasn't suicidal. Not really. I thought I was. I had suicidal thoughts, sure. I was in "pure, unbearable agony, and all I wanted to do was end my life." All I can say to that is...why didn't I? Why did I never try? Why didn't I engage in any suicidal behaviours? Because I wasn't really suicidal. I was hurting and looking for ways to express that pain. Thinking about suicide was a way for me to prove to myself that I was hurting, that something was wrong. It was desperation and looking for a way out. It was a cry for help. I was that emo 12 year old who just learnt the word depression and made it my identity. That doesn't mean my experience was any less valid. It just means that I wasn't truly suicidal. I compare that me with last year me, when I was truly depressed and suicidal. It was much more subtle than the

overdramatic characters I read in fics. I had mental health episodes where I did explode like some of these characters. Times when my parents had to call the crisis team on me. I had planned attempts too. But even then those were episodes, not a constant day to day life. Yes, those episodes can last a long time. This kind of portrayal is disrespectful and inaccurate to the majority of people struggling. There are people who are in long term mental health facilities because their day to day life is a crisis situation. Those people don't represent the majority of mental illness sufferers; they have severe long-term mental illness, and their condition is much more complex than "depression and suicidal." Usually there's trauma, ptsd, and bpd involved as well. Basically, if you are going to write a character who is always on the brink, you better research the hell out of it.

When I read suicidal characters who are in a constant meltdown, who go around crying about how tragic their poor little life is...it feels so fake. I just picture the author writing this for pity points. Sympathy. It's a piss poor way of getting readers to sympathize with your character, by writing tragedy porn. It feels exploitative and fetishising. Voyeurisyic, even. Like these authors are sitting there mocking suicidal people, taking our pain and our experiences and twisting a caricature out of it. It's like they're looking down at us and laughing about our lives. We're not a fucking circus.

You can write characters who are in a crisis, even a long term one, and have it still be an accurate portrayal. And that's the problem, the characters I see in most warriors fics aren't an accurate portrayal.

Most authors aren't doing this maliciously or intentionally. Most are young kids making a mistake with writing. Thinking making their character a walking tragedy is the only way to get readers to feel sorry for them. There's a popular fic on this site that I've had issues with for a long time. I won't name names because that won't do any good, I don't want to send hate on another author, and it's old. This fic had a character like what I described, and in one of their big crisis moments where they expressed they wanted to die, it was clearly a "oh, look at me, I'm hurting so badly please feel sorry for me!!!" And readers lap it up. Yay, sympathy points! All the comments are "oh, my heart is breaking, this poor character!!!" This

is a technique authors do when they don't know how to write a compelling character.

So...how do you write a suicidal character in a Warriors fic? The easiest thing is to consider is how StarClan affects suicide. Ask yourself this: will my character's problems still exist if they go to StarClan? If so, then you've got to rethink some things.

Research, of course, is important. More than a list of symptoms. Listen to people with lived experience. Even if you yourself have been suicidal. Watch videos, talk to multiple people to compare and contrast their experiences and perspectives. Even if you don't typically do a lot of research for fics and prefer to jump right in, do your research for this. If you enjoy writing just to write, without wanting to out in too much work, that's totally okay. But not in this circumstance, because you're writing about a very real and serious topic that many of your readers wouldve gone through. Why it's important to talk to a lot of people is because everyone has different experiences with suicide. I'm going to use some friends and myself as an example. This will be specific so major trigger warning for this part.

My friend attempted using the same method and same tool as I did one month after I attempted. She attempted twice in the same way and received hospital treatment the second time around. I didn't, though I ended up in hospital twice after my attempt because they misread my chart when I first came in and didn't give me the treatment I needed. We have similar experiences here, but things get very different after that. I was picked up by camhs, the public mental health system, and have been going to therapy for a year and a half under them. I was diagnosed with depression, social and generalised anxiety, and osfed, which was later rediagnosed as atypical anorexia. My friend was told she didn't have depression and wasn't picked up by the system. I have an eating disorder, she doesn't. I have depression, she doesn't. She has disassociation, I don't. She has a history of family issues that contribute to her mental health while I do. Her attempts were primarily triggered by immediate situations (on top of mental health issues) while mine were triggered by long term mental health problems.

You can see how our experiences with suicide are different, even

though we attempted the same way and live in the same overall environment. That's why you need to talk to a range of people, or watch videos/read articles by a range of people, because people will tell you different things. People experience suicidality and exhibit symptoms in different ways.

I wanted to pop back in and edit something in real quick.

creamtea makes a really important point here. A little bit was cut off so feel free to check out her comment! Your character doesn't have to be actively having breakdowns and making attempts to be suicidal. I've never seen a suicidal character in a warriors fic who doesn't attempt suicide. A large amount or even the majority of suicidal people have never attempted suicide, or have in the past and currently deal with suicidal thoughts and don't act on them. A huge issue with the way we view mental health is that we only see the extremes of it. We see people who are in a crisis, are hospitalised after multiple attempts. This extends for all mental illnesses. And this doesn't represent a large portion of people. A lot of people who struggle with mental illness are struggling badly but aren't acting on behaviours. That doesn't make their mental illness any less serious. As well as that, people who are actively engaging in behaviours and are in a crisis would theoretically be receiving a high level of care, even in a warriors fic. It would be a great portrayal to see a character struggling but not in a crisis. It would be very validating to people who are struggling and help shift the narrative that a person has to be in danger and at their worst to receive help.

Ed tw // This paragraph isn't applicable to Warriors fanfiction but is very important so if you're not interested you can skip it but I thought I should write about it anyway. The above point is really important because "the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff approach" is ineffective and viewing mental health only by the extreme cases worsens this problem. People should not have to be in danger to receive help from the mental health system. A suicidal person not acting on their urges is just as deserving and in need of help as someone who is attempting. The ambulance should not be at the bottom of the cliff, waiting for someone to fall. It should be at the top of the cliff; mental health services should be about

prevention of mental illnesses worsening too. Media portraying mental health in extremes makes it so much harder for sufferers to get help. I've experienced this myself. When I was first diagnosed with an eating disorder, I was told and I quote "we will not offer you treatment until you lose more weight." That's very dangerous to say to someone with an ed, and real life proof that people are denied help based on the idea that their mental illnesses aren't seen as serious because they're not on their death bed. Sure, Warriors fanfiction won't have this big affect on the world and the mental health system, but portraying the less extreme or less visible side of mental illness may help change some people's minds, and that's makes a huge difference.

I didn't write this chapter to shame anyone who makes these mistakes. If you're reading this and you've written some of these issues, or you want to write a suicidal character but are scared of portraying it wrong, please don't be scared out of writing it! I'm not gonna show up to your house and beat you up if you make a mistake. I've done it. Everyone does it. Accept that you're going to make mistakes, apologise when you make them, fix them up, and learn from it. Obviously do your best to portray suicide in fics as correctly as you can, but please don't feel terrified all the time when writing or avoid writing suicidal characters out of fear. I don't want to scare you out of writing, and we want to be represented!

I hope this was helpful, and I know it's a little dark and serious but I tried to keep it light as possible.

Small Things That Annoy Me II

1.) The disproportionate amount of female protagonists to male protagonists. I swear there are no male protagonists in Warriors fanfics. They're rarer than unicorns. No, commenters, I don't need to hear about your male protagonists. Every time I complain about something, you all come out of the woodwork "oooh, look at my character!" It's fine when you're talking about specific parts of your fanfics and how they relate to each chapter, but if all you're doing is saying you have an lgbt+ character like you're special among a sea of people commenting the same thing...you get the idea. If you have a male protagonist, congrats, here's your award.

Maybe that's a bit harsh. I'm glad my chapters validate some of you. It's much better than make people feel awful! But back on topic, seriously, there are so many female protagonists compared to male ones. I'm guilty of this. Saving Sable has a female protagonist, See You Alive has two female protagonists (fun fact: Greeneyes was originally a male character called Slightspark) two fics I'm planning have female protagonists...at least I have Eyesore to show for myself. I understand why people do this - it's easier to connect to and write characters similar to ourselves. And as this community is very female-dominated...VERY female-dominated...it's only natural there are more female protagonists than male ones. I know I connect more with female characters in my own writing. That's something I need to work on.

But it's annoying all the same. If you want to become a skilled writer, you need to be able to connect with and write a diverse range of characters, not just ones like yourself. If you don't want to take your writing that seriously and just want to write for fun without challenging yourself, you can ignore this advice. But for people wanting to grow their talent and skills, you need to challenge yourself! You can't write the same character over and over again. It gets boring for readers and stifles your skills. It's like an artist drawing the same pose over and over again. You have to challenge yourself to grow as a writer. I think we also have to

evaluate why we struggle to connect with characters of other genders. It could all boil down to the way we're taught to think of boys and girls being alien from each other, the different things we're taught and our worldviews based on gender roles, and how most of us aren't taught about nonbinary people at all. That's a long discussion for another day, just food for thought.

2.) I'm sick, sick, sick of the Clans! One of the best things about Warriors is that it provides fanfic writers with so many opportunities. Warriors has some incredible concepts, many of which aren't fully explored. Especially the societies in Warriors. There's the Tribe, The Sisters, rogues, loners, kittypets, and whatever WarriorClan is. Don't beat me up but I haven't read Graystripe's Vow yet. You guys could even be creative and make up your own cat societies set in the Warriors universe. I have, and I'm planning out that fic right now. Or stick to the Clans and make your FanClans original and unique. I've said it before and I'll say it again: if your FanClan has no worldbuilding or culture and are just copies of the canon Clans with different names, just stick to the canon Clans!

3.) Why are there no elders in fics? It's like they don't exist! No elder protagonists, supporting characters, or relatives. There are barely any casual mentions. Elders are so underutilized, it's criminal. Maybe it's because elders in the canon series became less relevant and less respected and the fandom adopted that attitude, and now everyone sees them as boring. But I'd say this comes back to the idea that you guys like to stick to your little bubble of comfortable writing. You need to challenge yourself! Sure, it's easy to write a "relatable" young protagonist like yourself, but good writing doesn't come from taking the easy route. Diversify your fucking protagonists! Try to get into the head of an older, experienced character. It'll strengthen your ability to create characters. A while ago I talked about some future projects in my smb and one of them was a standard prophecy/journey book with a twist - the main cast were all elders. There are so many interesting and unique issues you can explore with elders - ageism, the struggles of getting older and having your mind and body betray you, feeling useless and alienated from wider society, a burden on your family, having relatives and friends die, dealing with your own

mortality. Doesn't that sound interesting? But y'all would rather write the same boring high school struggles about who likes who with your apprentice/young warrior protagonists? Couldn't be me.

Grace and Frankie is a great show (on Netflix) that portrays issues elderly people face in a deep way as well as being fucking hilarious. Also it's gay.

[image]

[image]

[image]

4.) On the subject of elders, I'm real fucking tired of stereotypical "I'm a grumpy old man" elders. Been there, done that. If I wanted to read Mousefur 2.0, I think I'll stick to the original. On the rare occasion, I see elders in wc fanfiction, they always act like this! Not every elder sits in their nest all day and whines about their ticks and apprentices not running around after them. Respect your elders. Give them more personality traits than grumpy. If you want people to connect with your characters, give them more than one personality trait. No one wants to read about a one-dimensional character. And if you're going to make them grumpy, at least give a valid reason behind that grumpiness. My grandad is a stereotypical grumpy old man. But that's because of his chronic pain due to age. Living in pain every minute of every day is enough to make anyone short-tempered. My grandad also happens to be incredibly generous, very practical and business-savvy. Because he's a real person and there's more to him than his demeanour, just as your characters should be. Maybe your elder character feels unappreciated by their Clan or they feel they're seen as useless. Kinda like the way the canon series and you guys see them. I'd be bitter too. Maybe they're struggling to accept their old age and feel like a burden. Maybe the majority of their friends, family, and all the people they've grown up with are dead. I wouldn't expect any elder to be a ray of sunshine if they were struggling with some of those issues. Or, you know, you could take the non-grumpy route. It's really not that hard to flesh out your characters and avoid stereotypes.

5.) Some of you have never had a real conversation with someone and it shows. I see a lot of people writing dialogue that no one would ever say? People will write dialogue that is beautiful and eloquent, saying deep, poetic things. People usually don't do that. Not even really deep, serious people. I'm fully guilty of doing this. Read Saving Sable, it'll be a laugh. Y'all know I like to write poetry, but I've never said shit like "I have always searched for divinity like you." No one talks like that! Let's be clear, realism isn't always the way to go in writing. Sometimes dialogue like that works, like in dramatic moments where you need to emphasize things. You want your books to exaggerate some things to illicit emotions. But please understand, it doesn't make you sound deep or smart to have your characters talk like they just inhaled a poetry book. It doesn't make you a good writer. It makes you sound pretentious, and it makes me want to simultaneously laugh and gag when I see it. So if you're writing your characters to say some big poetic paragraph...just stop and think. Would anyone in your life say that? Would they say "I've seen laughter, I've tasted freedom. I've touched perfection, I've heard divinity. And it was those who destroyed me the most. So do your worst, Swiftear. I will let the bears shake me to the ground and I will walk out alive. Because I am indestructible, I am a god. So touch me. And maybe you can feel it too." Bonus points if you know where that's from. I can tell you now, no one would ever say that. If your characters speak like that all the time...please stop. In a big, deep, dramatic moment, it's fine to write poetic speeches and what have you, but in casual conversation, or if you're doing it too much, it sounds really stupid. Pretty words don't make for good writing, and if all you want to do is string together beautiful sounding words, stick to poetry.

6.) People inventing rules for their fanclans and societies that have no meaning behind them. I see more and more unique rules in FanClans and I'm loving it! I love the creativity and worldbuilding. But I get really annoyed when I see societies that have rules with no meaning behind them. Things like "only she-cats can become leaders." It's worse when even the characters in the society know there's no reason for the rule, or say something like "we don't know why that's a rule" when it's something really important. This isn't major, it's just lazy writing and makes no sense to me. Imagine living in a world where only women were leaders. (Would it really

be so bad though...?) Or only people with green eyes, or something like that. You'd at least want some kind of explanation! Are your characters dumb? Are they sheep instead of cats? Why don't they question these random rules with no reason for them? This is something I'm seeing a surprising amount in fanfic and I urge you guys to think a little more when writing and worldbuilding. If you're not into super detailed worldbuilding, that's totally fine, but even then, big rules that determine how your Clan or society is run should have some sort of meaning behind it. If it doesn't, that's just plain bad writing. Don't worry though, it's an easy fix!

7.) A lot of writers, especially new or young writers, are scared of people disliking their protagonist. So when they give their characters flaws, they'll only go with "safe" flaws - a fault enough to stop the protagonist from being a Mary Sue, but nothing actually bad. These traits are things like stubbornness, and being hotheaded, things that can still be seen in a positive light, and may be something that the reader even likes about the character, or just doesn't really care about. No! This is just a spicy Mary Sue! An interesting protagonist is far better than a likable one. In The Young Elites series, the protagonist turns into a villain. She isn't likable in the slightest but damn is she interesting. That's why I love her, not because I think she's nice and I agree with everything she does. That makes a juvenile, boring protagonist. You have got to stop being scared of giving your characters real flaws out of the fear that it'll make people dislike them. Actually, it makes them more human - even if they're a cat - and relatable. People will be more invested in them and it really limits what you can do with your character. There will always be people who won't like your protagonist. Some personalities rub people the wrong way. Don't focus on likability. If you want to write a good fic, you can't write for approval. Write interesting characters, not likable ones. People will connect more with those characters. You can explore their development and themes through their character much more. For example, in my fic See You Alive, Greeneyes is extremely controlling and is enforcing cultural assimilation on another Clan. Those aren't likable actions, but it makes Greeneyes a much more interesting character than one who always did the right thing, save for being a little hot-headed or stubborn. For clarity, I'd like to emphasise this doesn't mean that a dislikable character is inherently more compelling than a likable

one, or that you should make all your protagonist's assholes. No, in fact, I have issues with optimistic and likable characters being infantilised and treated as shallow. I just hate seeing writers dull down their characters to make them likable. I see a lot of warriors fics where it's obvious the writer is too scared to give their characters any flaws, or have them make mistakes or poor decisions out of fear that the audience will dislike them. That makes the character bland and boring. Basically, don't make your character boring at the expense of them being likable!

8.) Protagonist telling readers about relationships and little tidbits of history in their inner monologue, almost directly addressing the reader. Other than being tell not show, it leaves no room for imagination! Good writing needs to leave holes for readers to fill in. It isn't important that two side characters are siblings or had a big dramatic fight in the past. If it is important, it should come up in the plot naturally! Work it into dialogue, character reactions, etc. Your readers are smart! Respect them and their ability to fill the gaps! You don't have to spell everything out for them. This is something I've done in my writing. I love my characters and I just want my readers to know every little thing about them! But a lot of those little details aren't important. I get so annoyed when a character tells the audience things in their inner monologue. It takes me out of the story and makes it harder to connect with the protagonist and the story. It feels so unnatural, you know?

9.) No mentor/apprentice relationships. Okay, we can blame the canon series for this too. The first series makes a point of mentors and apprentices have a special and deep relationship. And then that gets forgotten later on in the series. Apprentices and mentors are assigned randomly with no thought for personality or skills that match, or teacher skills. The moment apprentices become warriors they forget all about their mentors. Come on, guys! Your mentors should be an important part of your protag's life! Or your protagonist's previous apprentices could still be really close to them. It's just a cool and underutilized relationship dynamic. A mentor and apprentice that don't get along, making the apprentice feel so jealous and hard done by because they don't get the beautiful relationship everyone else seems to have with their mentors. A character who's a great mentor and has an army of past apprentices

on their side. Warriors and apprentices who have had the same mentor becoming like siblings. Come onnn, it could be so interesting!

10.) Adding onto that, a general lack of interesting relationships and dynamics. I see the same basic relationships over and over again. The protagonist has a best friend, maybe two, one sibling, parents they barely interact with if they're lucky enough to have them, a love interest, and that's it. I want to see diversity in relationships. A protagonist who already has a mate, and maybe some past lovers. That means you might have to write some characters who aren't the warriors equivalent of a teenager or a 20-year-old. Diverse ages, how scary. I'd love to see a protagonist with a group of friends and the dynamics within the group, a protagonist with kits, more mentor-apprentice relationships that have survived into adulthood, interesting relationships with parents that don't fall into the "my parents were shitty to me" or "my parents were super loving but now they're dead" stereotypes. I want to see old friends with beef, grudges against people who have hurt the protagonist, unrequited crushes, characters still getting over each other, rivals and enemies between side characters.

Y'all Need To Behave

So, this rant is a little different. It's not actually about fanfiction, but it is about the warriors Wattpad community. I originally published this in my smb, but I decided to revise it and post it here because I think it's something this fandom needs to see.

I want to preface this by saying it is not an attack or an indirect on any one individual. This is about certain harmful behaviours a lot of people on here. If you recognise these in yourself, please don't get upset, I promise I'm not calling you a horrible person, but I am calling out toxic behaviours. And if the shoe fits...reflect on that. With this rant, I tried to find the line between understanding and harsh, because I don't want to hurt anyone and I know the people engaging in this behaviour are vulnerable and struggling, while still explaining how serious and harmful this is and condemning the behaviour. There are no excuses for this kind of thing. But if there's anything in here that you think it out of line, could be phrased better, or anything you think I missed, please pm me or comment!

Trigger Warnings: Suicide, self-harm, and general mental illness. Please don't read this if you think it will cause you distress!

A lot of us struggle with depression, suicidal ideation, and other mental illnesses. And a lot of us come on here to vent. There's nothing wrong with venting! But there are healthy and unhealthy ways of venting and unfortunately, I've been seeing a lot of the latter.

A lot of you are logging in here, talking about how you want to/are going to hurt or kill yourself,. And you're doing this without trigger warnings through announcements or smbs or other public means. And that just isn't okay. Let your Local Mentally Ill bitch let you in on a secret: people here aren't therapists. We're not your helpline, we're no crisis team. We're a bunch of regular teens/young adults. When you vent here about how you want to hurt yourself, you're not going to help yourself. You're just going to stress people out. I'll

be blunt, if you're out here typing "hey I'm about to kill/cut myself" you're being manipulative and verging into suicide baiting territory and it isn't okay. Nobody here can help you. We can't call the police, an ambulance, or your family. It creates these feelings of helplessness and fear among your friends and followers here. It's terrifying. And that's the reason why you do this. You don't reach out to your irl friends or family, not just because you feel like they won't understand, but because they'll offer you help. And you don't want that. So you traumatise an entire community of people so you can get those validating "please don't hurt yourself!!! We love you!!!" comments. It's a way to express your pain and reach out without the risk of someone intervening and providing you with actual help.

You're being attention-seeking. That's a term I don't like to use in the context of mental health. But it's the truth. You're reaching out for help in the only way you know how. You need those validating comments to make yourself feel better, to lift you out of that depressed, about to harm yourself state. It's the only way you feel that you're loved and worth something. There's nothing wrong with a cry for help. When I started self harming, that's 100% what it was. If I'm being completely honest, my first suicide attempt was a cry for help too.

The problem is that your cry for help comes at the expense of your followers and your friends and doesn't actually help you. I've had to talk internet friends out of suicide before and trust me, it's traumatic. It made me feel like I was responsible for someone's else's safety. I've spent hours trying to say the right thing while having no idea what is the right thing, trying to keep my own anxiety at bay, terrified I'm about to lose a friend. No untrained teen should have to shoulder that responsibility. And that's the kind of thing you guys are doing to your audience, and it isn't okay. Your audience cannot be held responsible for your safety or mental health. Doing so is irresponsibly using your platform. And yes, you have a platform, even if it's small. I've seen a lot of people here condemning Draikinator and other public figures all while abusing their platform just like they did. This community is full of kids and young people. We have to make our community safe.

It's worse when I see people keep on repeating this behaviour, who are old enough to know better, and have been warned about it before. That's when my sympathy runs out. At that point, you know you're hurting others and you're putting your own needs for validation before that, and that's plain fucking selfish. I know you're hurting, but that doesn't mean you can hurt other people. We aren't your crisis line, you don't get to take advantage of having followers who care about you that way. I don't care if you "want to say your goodbyes." It causes so many people pain. If you feel like you're going to kill yourself and you want to say goodbye, type up that message and leave instructions for a friend or a family member to publish it on wattpad after you're dead. It will still be painful - suicide will always cause pain - but you're not going to leave your followers in a helpless panic, wondering how they might save you. No one should ever be put under that kind of stress. If you need someone to talk you down, call a helpline with trained crisis workers who can help you. Obviously, the best thing to do is not to hurt yourself. I'm in no way encouraging or endorsing that. I don't want anyone to be hurting or killing themselves. I could give you list of resources and coping techniques, but that's not the purpose of this chapter - pm me if you want. But if you're certain you're going ahead with it, here's what to do and what not to do around announcing it on wattpad.

I don't know how you guys rationalise this. A lack of self-awareness, maybe? I have friends who have had to talk others out of suicide, and how scary that situation was for them, and then put me through the same thing. I forget trigger warnings and overstep boundaries at times without realising it and talking to friends. But that's different from intentionally terrifying hundreds of your followers. You want to keep your followers updated on your life and your mental health? Make sure it's in a healthy and appropriate way. I talk about my struggles with my eating disorder, depression, suicide, and self-harm on Wattpad a lot, but I make sure it isn't in a way that could cause people harm. I didn't tell my followers I was going to off myself before I tried it. I had a note and instructions for a friend to post it, but after I didn't die, I let my friends on wp know what happened and that I was now in therapy. You "just wanted to vent?" I don't care, it's still not appropriate. Go and vent on a vent server designed for this purpose, or to a hotline. Privately pm a

friend if you need to, as long as you're respecting that friend's boundaries. You don't need your hundreds of followers to hear your struggles in deep detail. Say that you're struggling, but don't go into triggering detail. Just stop hurting others for your own gains, it's not that hard. When it's someone younger, around 11-13, I'm more sympathetic. Going through mental illness at that age is tough and in my own experience, you haven't developed the maturity needed to deal with it in a healthy way. But if you're younger, or haven't realised how harmful this behaviour is, here's your formal warning. Now you know. If you keep acting like that, that's a real shitty thing to do.

The worst is when people threaten suicide or self-harm on their announcements without even a trigger warning. You followers didn't consent to that, you didn't give them the choice to click away. There are so many obvious ways this is harmful and easy fixes to reduce that harm, so if you're doing this shit, there's no fucking excuse. None. If you desperately have to vent on wattpad (which you literally don't - vent servers and helplines exist for this kind of thing, and you can vent without hurting your friends) do it in your fucking smb with trigger warnings where people have the option to click away; you're not just bombarding people's notifications with your unsolitcited suicidal vent.

So how should you vent? I think it's best to vent directly to friends on here in pms, on discord or whatever, and have set boundaries with those friends. I have a friend who I vent to, and what we do is always give trigger warnings and check that the other is okay with venting before we go into it so we don't trigger each other or cause each other harm. Venting directly to friends wit their permission means that you can express your emotions without harming anyone or bringing wider groups of people into your problems so that they're not scared for you. That way it's much less public . Nothing wrong with letting your followers know if you're in a bad place, but you should avoid going into the specifics (unless you're talking about self harm or suicide or any danger that you've caused yourself in the past)

If you want to vent through your smb, give SPECIFIC trigger warnings so your audience knows and can click away if they feel

they're going to get hurt. That way everyone is consenting, but again I urge you to avoid saying you're going to hurt yourself to a wide audience.

You have to consider the impact of your actions on others, and distressing your audience helps no one. It makes you selfish. Just because you're mentally ill, doesn't mean you can't or shouldn't be held accountable for your actions. Your mental illness may drive your behaviours but it isn't an excuse. I know this sounds harsh, but I'm not gonna baby y'all because you're mentally ill. There are many mentally ill people on this site who manage to deal with their crises without traumatising their audience. I know seeking help and validation can be a symptom of mental illness, but you still have control to get that validation in a healthy way. A hard truth about dealing with mental illness is that you still have to take accountability for your actions, and you have to fight the illness to get better. For example, I use self-harm to cope as a symptom of my depression, but I'm not a slave to my illness. I can make the conscious choice to do everything I can to keep myself safe. You can too. Maybe your brain is begging you to kill yourself and tell your followers about it so that their "no, please don't do it!! We love you!!!" comments can get you through another day. But you have to fight against those impulses and find a way to help yourself without hurting others, and if you won't do that, that's a choice that you made, and you deserve all the criticism that you get.

I don't want people to come away from this chapter upset at themselves or at me. This is coming from a place of concern and a want to keep our community to be safe. If you've participated in this kind of toxic behaviour in the past, don't blame yourself. I've done it. When I was 13, I wrote a friend a letter after an argument telling her about my self harm so that she'd understand I'd only been a bitch to her because I was depressed. And I signed it with blood. So trust me, *I know what it's like*. I've been there. Everyone messes up. Take accountability, correct your behaviour, and move on. You can't change the past but you can grow and strive to be better in the future. If you're currently doing this sort of thing, don't feel like I hate you or that you're a horrible person. You're not. You're hurting, you're misguided, and I'm sorry you're struggling right now. Once again, take accountability and grow. Get the help

you need, whether you want it or not. Reach out to irl people who can actually help you in a crisis or help you recover from your mental illness. From someone currently recovering, it's so worth it. "It gets better" sounds cheesy and stupid when you're struggling because you feel so awful, you can't imagine how it could ever get better. You've been so sad for so long, and nothing's improved. And even if things do get better in the future, you can't get through the present to get there. But I promise it's true. I spent my entire teens mentally ill, but now I'm 19, and I'm so glad I held on to get to where I am. But if you're someone who has repeatedly done this behaviour and have multiple people tell them how hurtful it is...fuck you. You're being selfish and it hurts this entire community. I'm begging you to please fucking stop, for the people you're hurting, for your future self who's going to look back full of regret. For yourself, because if you're mentally ill, you really don't want to fall into another pattern of negative behaviour patterns that you'll have to unlearn.

Mental illness II

Tw for mental health in general: eating disorders, self harm, trauma mentions. Nothing in detail!

Grab a snack and buckle up, because this chapter is going to be a long ride. Today we're talking about mental illness, romanticisation, stigma, and inaccuracies. I'd originally planned on making multiple chapters about this, but I'd rather keep it all in one big mega-chapter.

As a side note, please don't use this as a tool for self-diagnosis! On the original version of this chapter, there was a lot of comments of people saying "oh I have x symptom and y symptom that you mentioned, does that mean I have z disorder??" Maybe it does, maybe it doesn't. If you're concerned you have a mental illness, start researching. Don't self diagnose if you have the opportunity to actually talk to someone, because mental illnesses are complex! Many overlap and it's very easy to misdiagnose - autism is often misdiagnosed as bpd or depression in women, adhd and autism have similar traits. And a lot of media around mental illness completely pathologise normal behaviours. Just because you have low self-esteem, doesn't mean you are depressed. Sometimes you just have low self-esteem. If you really feel like something's wrong though, you absolutely should talk to someone! It's better to get help when you're struggling even if you don't have a disorder than to deal with it alone and for it to get worse.

First off, this is a massive topic with SO MUCH NUANCE. This isn't a guide to how to write mental illness, because that would take all day, but dissecting some of the harmful tropes I see in this fandom regarding mental illness. This issue is much deeper than I'll be discussing here, because it could be a book all on its own. There are so many facets and elements to writing mental illness, and everyone has different opinions, so I'd recommend doing some reading up! I can only cover half of what I want to say, and this is 4000+ words

already.

I promise you I'm not some know-it-all with a superiority complex trying to tell you all how to write with no experience myself. I'm mentally ill. If you've read earlier chapters, you know this already. I can't speak on behalf of people with personality disorders or psychosis, or every single disorder in the dsm, but I've been diagnosed with major depression, social and generalised anxiety, multiple eating disorders, and have struggled with self harm and suicide attempts. What can I say, I'm a collector. I'm doing a lot better now. Hey, remember in the first chapter about mental illness when I said I hadn't experienced depression? That aged like milk. Let's hope me doing well ages better. I'm also a psych major, so while I'm far from an expert, I know a lot more than I did in the first chapter. I've also written about mental illness many times, and I've made all the mistakes in the book.

So let's talk about romanticing mental illness, because in my opinion it's probably the worst issue we have in this fandom. Romanticising mental illness is essentially highlighting the positive elements of mental illness while downplaying the negative aspects, or fetishising it to make a character seem tragic or interesting so readers like them more. That doesn't mean that writing mentally ill characters needs to be doom and gloom all the time, but not treating mental illness like it's some beautifully tragic thing to have, that it makes someone any more interesting than someone without mental illness. How many times have you read about some poor anxious uwu softboi warrior, or some tragic depressed cat who's gone through tragedy after tragedy? How many fics have you read with the broken protagonist? How many times have you read a fic like that and thought "aww, that poor character?"

So many mentally ill characters are written for pity points. Authors want to write a compelling and likable character, and the easiest way is to make them depressed and traumatised. I went over this in my chapter on suicide - our experiences are used as trauma/tragedy porn. And this is 100% romanticism. Romanticising mental illness doesn't only mean believing that mental illnesses are a good thing, a large part of it is using mental illness to make a character interesting.

See, this is what worries me. As a teen, I grew up in internet communities about mental health like tumblr and instagram, because I found them relatable. That did a lot of damage. I was surrounded by shit like this:

Suicide tw, not graphic!!

[image]

So it'll come as no surprise that I ended up romanticising my illnesses. They became the only interesting thing about me. They were my identity. Now tell me how many mentally ill characters in fanfiction are written like that? Their sadness is their only personality trait. A mental illness is not an identity. If all your character does is sit around "ohhh, look at me, I'm so depressed, everyone who ever loved me is dead and I'm bullied," You're romanticising mental illness. Mental illness can completely take over your life, but unless you're in an episode, you still have more to your life. Mental illness can play a dominant role in someone's life and sometimes can feel like it's your only personality trait. But that's an episode. Mental illness fluctuates, sometimes it's easier, and you can function and push through it, and sometimes it derails your life.

A mental illness isn't going to make people fall in love with you, or make you some tragic figure. It doesn't make your characters more interesting. I'm ten times the person I was when I was sick. Now I have a personality that's more than counting calories, fear of food, and sadness. I can go out with friends. I have passions, hopes, and dreams again. I'm still mentally ill, but there's more to me than my illness. And unless your character is deep in an episode, they should be more than their illness too. It's shitty to reduce a mentally ill person to their illness. Trauma doesn't make you a better, more interesting, or "spicier" person. Putting your character through trauma after trauma after tragedy isn't going to make me like them more. It's gonna bore me. It's gonna make me think "man, this writer seems to think the only way to make a character likeable and interesting is to put them through some horrible shit, and then wait for the pity points to come rolling in."

But what's the big deal? It's offensive. My mental illness wasn't some kind of beautiful tragic story. My depression wasn't some "uwu poor baby" storyline. No boy came and fell in love with me despite my sadness and made me feel loved. It didn't make people go "poor her, her life is so sad and tragic." It was years of feeling nothing but sadness or emptiness. It was isolation, living in my bed, in my room, doing nothing, having absolutely no life. Rotting on the inside. It was hell on earth. There was nothing remotely pretty or appealing about it. It didn't make me unique or interesting, I lost my personality and I had no life.

And of course, it creates a very inaccurate and harmful view of mental illness. It stops people from getting help because they think their mental illness is the most interesting thing about them. it sounds extreme, I know, and a bunch of warriors fics isn't going to cause that mindset, but trust me, it's only adding to the problem. Your mentally ill characters are people too, and they should be just as fleshed out as your other characters. They should have goals, hopes, dreams, relationships, etc. They're not just a walking ball of anxiety, even though anxiety can feel like that sometimes.

The most common trope I see is the poor anxious softboi. I'm sure you've all seen the way people treat Ravenpaw and Alderheart. Wee little anxious babies! Such sweethearts! I wanna protecc the smol beans!! I...feel physically sick. Anxiety isn't cute. My anxiety has inhibited my life so much. If I could use a magic wand and make it go away, I would in a second. I understand relating to anxious characters and liking them for that reason, but going on and on about how cute they are because of their anxiety is when it all gets weird. People infantilise characters like that so much - especially female readers over sweet, soft, sensitive anxious boys. I'm using Ravenpaw as an example, not because I think the Erin's romanticised his anxiety but because of how the fandom treats him, and how people make ocs similarly to him, but completely misunderstand his anxiety. As an apprentice, Ravenpaw was bullied by his mentor, a cat with power over him who was supposed to protect him, and feared for his life. He was in an environment not suited for him, and constantly put in situations that made him anxious. As soon as he got away from those life stressors, he became a much more relaxed and healthy guy. But when people in the

fandom talk about him, it's always about how he's an anxious baby and how much they love him because of that. Again, this is different from loving him because you relate to his anxiety. That cute little anxious baby Ravenpaw was fucking miserable and terrified. That doesn't make him cute. There's nothing pleasant or desirable about being in that state.

Mental illness is often ugly. Think about Bluestar and Palebird: they did some shitty things at times, and that was because of their illnesses. Palebird canonically had postnatal depression, and the Erin's said Bluestar had dementia. The symptoms don't match up and in my opinion she has ptsd. That shouldn't be used as an excuse, but you should understand mental illness is complicated and messy, not cute.

It also harms mentally ill people because it perpetrates inaccuracies about mental illness. It's been a long road for society to dismantle ableism and understand mental illness, and there's still a long way to go. This makes things harder.

Because tiktok is pretty much 2014-2017 tumblr reincarnated, romanticing mental illness is a big problem there, especially with eating disorders. Young teens exposed to that kind of content and getting involved in toxic parts of the mental health community will probably end up going through what I and many other mentally ill teens did, in that they feel like their mental illness is their identity. That makes it so difficult to recover and is obviously a really unhealthy mindset. It took me so long to truly want to recover and put in the work to do so because of that mindset. My teens would've been much better experience for me if I hadn't felt this way. This seems like an irrelevant tangent but the romanticisation of mental illness in this fandom doesn't exist in a vacuum. We see mental illness this way because of societal attitudes and social media. I won't go too indepth into this, because as again, this could be a whole essay, but I need to make it clear that a lot of the kids in the fandom who write this kind of thing aren't the problem, they're getting these ideas from outside sources.

A lot of the kids who write this stuff are using it as a way to process and cope with their own mental health issues and struggles. When you're young and mentally ill, you often don't have the coping

mechanisms to deal with it, and it often feels like the worst thing in the world. That's where the tragedy porn comes in, that overdramatic kind of sadness. That's what mental illness can feel like when you don't understand it or how to cope with it. It's so easy to fall into the trap that your illness makes you interesting, and that comes out in writing. Writing about your beautifully tragic protagonist makes your own reality feel a little brighter.

So I'm not shaming people who don't know better. But this is your wake up call. Your depression isn't beautifully tragic. Neither is your anxiety, your self harm, your eating disorder. It's hard to imagine life without them, but it's so much better. Get the help you need, start recovery.

And on that note: no love interest is going to cure mental illness. No one's hot enough to do that. If I catch any of you using mental illness as a tool to make your cute ships soooo romantic and shippable, or a prop for dramatic reveals, or to make any character look better as part of their saviour-complex, I'll banish you from this fandom myself. We're not props in a love story, or to make anyone look good or bad. It's not an aesthetic. Mental illness isn't a character trait, and we're not your inspiration porn.

So let's talk about inaccuracies. It's very easy to mess up and misrepresent mental illness. I've done it. I'm not here to shame anyone for honest mistakes. Mental illness is really complicated and hard to understand if you haven't gone through it. You all know the drill: if you want to write about mental illness, do your research, and if you're not willing to put in the work to properly represent us, don't write about us. Don't twist our stories and disrespect us.

The biggest issue I see with inaccuracies is when people fall into stereotypes. This is very common with villains and "crazy" characters. Villains are often written as evil and unfeeling, loving murder because they're a sick and twisted psychopath. And, you know, that's not inherently wrong. With a decent understanding of antisocial personality disorder, you can portray a villain like that. A lot of villains are written as "cRaZy □" violent and hallucinating. Psychotic people are more likely to be *victims* of violence than to be violent, likely because of this fear-mongering stereotype. It's inaccurate, and it adds to the stigma that makes the lives of

psychotic people so much harder. The stigma against illnesses like anxiety and depression is much better thanks to awareness, but "scary" illnesses like schizophrenia, dissociative identity disorder, and personality disorders are still villanised. I'm not saying that no mentally ill character can ever be a villain! But if your villain is the only mentally ill character you have, you might want to reflect on that and why that is. And honestly, that's just lazy writing. You really couldn't be bothered to think of an interesting motivation for your villain, so you just went with "he's a CRAZY, PSYCHOPATHIC MURDERER WHO BATHS IN KIT BLOOD BECAUSE THE VOICES TELL HIM TO DO IT!" Okay, calm down, edgelord. Mentally ill villains in media and ableism have been looong intwined, so it's no surprise it pops up in warriors fanfiction.

I know, I know. I'm being melodramatic. A couple of warriors fics aren't going to change the world. They're not the reason schizophrenic people are mistreated. But every little portrayal of mentally ill people counts. Think of young kids reading warriors fics and seeing a real, positive portrayal of mental health issues. It might help change their worldview, help them understand mentally ill people in their lives better, or maybe even themselves. Every little change is important.

I mean, if you're going to borrow stories that don't belong to you, the experiences that real people face, the least you could do is put in the effort to represent them right.

This isn't a guide, but I'll give some quick tips:

Before you even think about writing a character with mental illness, evaluate your motivations and intentions. Why do you want to write a mentally ill character? Be honest with yourself about the harsh truth if necessary. Do you want to explore mental illness, is it important to your character and their story? Do you want to represent mentally ill people? What's the point of you telling this story - what message do you want your readers to take away from your book? If all it comes down to is "It makes my character interesting," or "It makes people like them," or even "it'll make my story deep, interesting, and cool!" you might want to take a step back. Nothing wrong with being interested, but make sure that interest comes with empathy. You want your message and portrayal

of mental illness to be able to stand on its own, you don't want to be scrambling to explain "oh, I'm not ACTUALLY glamorising depression" because the chances are, if you have to say that, you probably are. There are going to be readers who have experienced that mental illness before, and those who haven't, and you need to think about how either of those groups are going to interpret your story.

When researching mental illness, don't read a list of symptoms and call it a day. A textbook list of symptoms is a good place to start, but that doesn't describe what it's really like to be mentally ill. Read first hand accounts of mental illness from mentally ill people, and read a range of experiences. Everyone goes through their illness differently. Familiarise yourself with the different ways that disorder can manifest so you have a deeper understanding. When I wrote Saving Sable, I took a list of symptoms and ran with it, and that led to some serious misunderstandings down the line. If possible, talk to people who have gone through the illness you're writing about. I'm more than happy to answer questions about any of the illnesses I've experienced. The DSM can give you a good idea of symptoms, but a person who's experienced the illnesses you're writing about can tell you how it feels and what it's like to live with that illness. I can't stress enough to look at first-hand experiences, don't base your research on movies or books, because they're often ableist, and inaccurate.

This is less relevant and might be for the more experienced writers, but as I said, mental illness doesn't exist in a vacuum. It can be caused by neurochemical imbalances and trauma, but what I think is overlooked is the effect of socioeconomic and political factors. Racism, homophobia, and sexism have huge influences over mental health and how it presents. For example, autism and adhd present a lot differently in afab people. This is understudied but a big reason why this is may be the way girls are socialised differently than boys as children. When we think adhd, we think hyperactivity, impulsively, "Hey, look, a sparkly thing!" That's... a huge stereotype, for one, but secondly, afab people present more with the inattentive type than the hyperactive type, possibly because girls are taught to sit down and shut up. To be polite and obey all the social rules girls are expected to adhere to. So when thinking about mental illness in

your Clan, look at the values, beliefs, and historical events that could be playing into the mental health of your characters.

inaccurate portrayals: mental illness can present very differently in different people. Mental illnesses are heterogeneous, meaning that people can fit the criteria for an illness in many different ways depending on what combo of symptoms they have. I can't remember the exact number my psych prof told me, but there's literally thousands of ways someone can fit the ptsd diagnosis. So just because a portrayal of an illness isn't to your taste or accurate to you, doesn't mean it's inaccurate. But accurate portrayals can still be bad portrayals. The main one is the tormented soul with depression, the one who's gone through grief and trauma after trauma. In my og chapter I shamed this kind of character and called it inaccurate. It's not. Depression *can* be like that, especially if it's caused by direct trauma and not just fucked up genetics. (thanks dad). But it's still not the best portrayal in my opinion, not if the character spends most of their time whining "oh, woe is me!!!" and crying at the sky. It feels very overdramatic, and while that's fine in an episode or a breakdown, it feels a bit "pity points" if it's the characters state of being. But it all depends on how you write, and if you see yourself in that kind of character, who am I to say it's wrong?

Did you guys know that more than one singular mentally ill person is allowed to exist? Because I don't think a lot of you do. I didn't notice this was an issue until _creamtea_ brought this up to me. You can have multiple characters with mental illnesses. Lots of people have them! It tends to run in families, and a lot of mentally ill people end up being friends with other mentally ill people because they can understand each other. I should know, most of my friend groups's on antidepressants. Also...mentally ill people exist. I know multiple people I went to high school with who went through the exact same things as I did, and I never knew. It doesn't have to be a big plot point! In my fic, See You Alive, one of the protagonists is dealing with ptsd, and it's a large part of her character arc. Her sister also has anxiety, even though that's never explicitly said or a large part of the plot. I see a lot of warriors characters become depressed because everyone they love dies. And first off, I'm so fucking bored of that trope, guys, find something original. Secondly,

why is it only ever the poor tragic protagonist who becomes so grief-stricken they develop depression? What happened to everyone else who was close to the deceased? Another common cause of mental illness you guys write about is abuse, especially parental abuse. Most abusers have multiple victims because abuse is a pattern of behaviour. And I know y'all looooove to write "poor protagonist is hated and abused by their parents, but not their siblings! Because nobody loves the poor baby protagonist, they're an outcast, all alone." I fucking hate that one too. It does happen, don't get me wrong, but it seems like you guys think there can only ever be one mentally ill character. It's the Chosen One, but instead of getting powers from StarClan, they get a fun little chemical imbalance and a healthy dose of trauma! In addition to that, often people don't have One Singular mental illness. Often they have comorbidities, like anxiety and depression, anorexia and ocd. That can make things harder, because you've got to understand the two disorders on their own, and how they interact.

Writing mental illness doesn't always have to be doom and gloom. I know I just ranted on and on about how you shouldn't portray mental illness as this beautiful thing to have, and that it's an ugly, life-destroying thing, but it doesn't always have to be that way. It depends on the kind of story you want to tell. Mental illness isn't always a big, dark, scary thing ruining your life. It's always going to have a negative impact - that's a literal requirement - but it's not always at its worst. Sometimes you can get by with a mental illness and be relatively okay. That's what I don't see. Mental illness when you're coping and getting by. Not in a deep dark episode. It depends on how your character's illness is affecting them. If it's manageable and long-lasting, you can add a little humour. That's how a lot of us cope. Just make sure it's appropriate and not making fun of mentally ill people, and it fits in with your plot. You can have the dark, ugly, and gritty stuff, and also the humour. I'll add an example with my friends. We can have deep, serious conversations about the things we've struggled with, or it can look a little like this:

POV: You're my friend group, slightly drunk, playing charades:

"Who here is on antidepressants? Oh, that's half of us, we can be a

team."

Friend who isn't on antidepressants, in a stage whisper"Okay, we need to let them win so they don't kill themselves"

I know this chapter probably wasn't helpful and only made things more scary and confusing. If you're young or inexperienced and are worried about making mistakes - you will. And that's totally okay! I'm not going to materialise in your room and yell at you. If your portrayal comes from a place of respect for mentally ill people and the real people whose stories and life you're borrowing, then mistakes are completely forgivable. Writing is about learning and growing and that comes with mistakes. Really, all you have to do is apologise, take accountability, and fix the issue, and everything will be fine! I'm not going to cancel you on Twitter.

At the end of the day, I want more representation for mentally ill people in media. But when it's done wrong, it can have disastrous effects on real people, and that's why we have to take this so seriously. The two types of people reading your book are those who have some kind of experience with that illness, whether it's personal or being close to someone who's gone through it, and people who have no understanding, and therefore you're introducing them to this mental illness. You have to make sure your work caters to both of those groups. You're going to portray an accurate account of mental illness so that those who have suffered can see themselves or someone else in the disorder, and that they feel comfortable and respected with your writing - you haven't sensationalised or villainized their story. And make sure that the people who are being introduced to this mental illness for the first time understand what that illness can be like, and don't go away harbouring stigma, hate, and misunderstanding.

It's a lot of responsibility and it's really complicated! So if you're young and inexperienced, your main takeaway should be:

The stories you're telling are experiences and the lives of real people. You need to respect them when writing your story. Don't villainise them and make them seem scary, don't romanticise them and make mental illness seem desirable or pretty. Don't write mental illness to make your characters interesting or likeable. Make

sure to do a lot of research so that you avoid making big mistakes. But most of all, be open to challenging yourself and growing. Writing is all about learning about other people and getting in their shoes. Take a bold leap and go for it, and if you mess up, that's okay!

The End

[image]
[image]

I've been writing this book since 2017, and as you can imagine, over the course of four years, I've changed a lot. That's very obvious in the change in tone from the beginning of this book til the end. I began this as a know-it-all fourteen year old, influenced by "older and wiser" fandom members. Wanting to impress them, I took a hard stance in all my opinions, shaming people for the way they wrote. But as I got older, I didn't like how aggressive the book was. Sure, brutal honesty is good in some circumstances, but I would hate to discourage people from writing by being overly harsh and critical. This is a rant book, so I'm gonna be ranting about things I dislike, but I could frame that in a way that was constructive, not harmful. Here I am, five years later, finishing this book on my nineteenth birthday. Now I just feel old and sentimental.

I left the older stuff up because I think the points I made still stand, but the tone changed. I think it goes to show that people can change, fandom attitudes change, and all that. But now I'm at a point where I don't see the need to keep writing this book. There'll always be things I don't like in fics, but I think I've covered all the glaring issues I want to cover. I was considering keeping it up and updating it sparingly, but I think it's best if I end it here. This book has run its course, and I'd rather spend my time uplifting this fandom than tearing it down. (I would like to say we need to criticise harmful things and discuss issues in this fandom, and keeping things positive all the time is just as toxic as being brutal, but a lot of this book is just petty, and if I see any big issues, I'll complain about it in my smb or add in a cheeky update, but this is functionally finished.)

I really appreciate everyone who's bothered to read 60 chapters of me whining, and those of you who've read any of this at all. It means a lot that you've taken the time out of your day to read my words. I really hope this has helped you guys in some way. It's

mindblowing to see that 5k people, individual people, have read at least one chapter of this book. 5000 people read the rant I wrote as a 14 year old. I never thought it would blow up as much as it did. I remember bragging to my parents about how I had 6k reads on my book, and them bragging about it to the rest of the family. And at the point of writing this, Things I Hate About Warriors Fanfiction stands at 87k reads. It's so surreal. I can't thank you all enough.

But I have good news! I know a lot of people use this for fanfiction tips, and so I thought I'd make a proper fanfiction tips book! It's not the top of my priorities right now so it won't be here for a while, but if you're interested, comment and I'll tag you when it's up! Don't get too excited, it won't be coming for a long time. I'm caught in a balancing act between uni, work, my friends, and my actual writing, and in between all that, I don't have much motivation. Tbh all I do in my free time at the moment is smoke weed to cope with the fact that I'm going to be studying for the next 6 years of my life, in a horrific amount of debt, and then I'll be plunged into the working adult world. In the meantime, feel free to check out my fics, see if I practice what I preach ;) But seriously, if you do like my rants, I have a warriors rant book called Spitting Shit about the canon series, and I'll take the time to promote my discord server for the Warriors Wattpad community, as it's a good place to make friends, chat about the series and writing! The idea behind that was that we should have a little "hub" for our community, and the more members, the better! Check the comments for the link. See, uplifting the fandom, not tearing it down! My pms are always open if you want advice, oooor you could join the server and get feedback from the wonderful people on it. ;) sorry to keep plugging the server, I just think it could be helpful.

Once again, I'm so grateful to all of you who have followed me down 60 chapters of this book, or anyone who's clicked on it at any point. It means a lot, and I hope you've got some good out of it!

And since this is the end...let's finish on a cat pic for old times sake, and y'all can see more of me than just my foot this time!